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Yours very sincerely,
 H. More

From the MS. in the possession of
 the Hon. the Secretary of the Admiralty

LE
MOSSD

THE

Complete Works

AND ALL MORE

277249/32
1. 9. 32



New-York

100 N. 2ND STREET, N. Y.
1840

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PUBLISHERS' ADDRESS.

WHEN the veil of mortality descends upon splendid genius, that has been long devoted to the instruction and best interests of mankind, the noblest monument that can be erected to commemorate its worth and perpetuate its usefulness, is the collection of those productions which, when separately published, delighted and edified the world.

No writer of the past or present age has equalled HANNAH MORE in the application of great talents to the improvement of society, through all its distinctions, from the humblest to the most exalted station in life. Her works have, indeed, in a very striking manner, and to an extraordinary extent, given a new and most important feature to the moral character of the nation she adorned. They have diffused vital religion, in faith and practice, over districts where its mere external form was before scarcely to be seen; and, what is still more deserving of admiration, this accomplished lady, by the power of her reasoning, and the elegance of her compositions, has succeeded, if the phrase may be permitted, in rendering piety fashionable and popular, where even the name of religion was, and that at no very distant period, treated with indifference, if not with absolute contempt.

After establishing her claim to the highest station in the temple of poetical fame, HANNAH MORE resolved to consecrate her talents wholly to His service from whom she had received them. This determination she carried into effect; and inconceivably great and extensive were the benefits it produced. When licentious principles began to be promulgated with industrious zeal, and to threaten the foundations of all moral and social order, then did this Christian heroine, armed in the panoply of truth, appear foremost to oppose the inroads of the enemies of righteousness. The success was unexampled. The tracts which, with uncommon celerity and admirable judgment, came from her fertile pen, operated like a charm, in confirming the wavering, and appalling the evil mind.

The venerable Bishop PORTEUS, in a charge delivered to the clergy of his diocese in 1798, having noticed the exertions made by different pious writers to excite the spirit of religion, says, "To these it would now be injustice not to add the name of another highly approved author, Mrs. HANNAH MORE; whose extraordinary and versatile talents can equally accommodate themselves to the cottage and the palace; who, while she is diffusing among the lower orders of the people an infinity of little religious tracts, calculated to reform and comfort them in this world, and to save them in the next, is at the same time applying all the powers of a vigorous and highly cultivated mind to the instruction, improvement, and high delight of the most exalted of her own sex. I allude more particularly to her last work, on female education, which presents to the reader such a fund of good sense, of wholesome counsel, of sagacious observation, of knowledge of the world and of the female heart, of high-toned morality, and genuine Christian piety; and all this enlivened with such brilliancy of wit, such richness of imagery, such variety and felicity of

allusion, such neatness and elegance of diction, as are not, I conceive, easily to be found so combined and blended together in any other work in the English language. Of the above-mentioned little tracts, no less than two millions were sold in the first year; and they contributed, I am persuaded, very essentially to counteract the poison of those impious and immoral pamphlets, which were dispersed over the kingdom in such numbers by societies of infidels and disaffected persons."

The popularity of Mrs. More's writings, never sensibly diminished, even by the vast increase of excellent and highly esteemed works in every department of literature by which the last twenty years have been distinguished, has been revived to an extent, perhaps, even greater than they achieved in the early period of their existence, by the recent publication of the admirable memoirs of her life and correspondence, prepared with so much skill and judgment by her chosen biographer and literary executor, Mr. Roberts; a work upon which the strongest language of approving criticism has been and still is bestowed by the highest authorities, both in this country and in England. The general acceptance with which those volumes were received, would have encouraged the publishers to follow them with an edition of Mrs. More's writings, even had they not been repeatedly advised and urged to the undertaking, not only by friends and in private, but by the almost united voice of the press throughout the Union. Had they not assumed it, with these inducements, they would have considered themselves as in some measure neglecting a duty, standing as they do in the light of caterers for the literary gratification of the public, whose wishes and opinions they are bound to respect, at least, if not implicitly to follow.

It is hoped and believed that the present collection, which contains all the writings of that eminent lady, in a convenient as well as handsome form, and is published at a very moderate price, will be received with a degree of favour not less cordial and extensive than that which was and still is accorded to the memoirs. To adopt the words of a religious periodical of high character, used in speaking of those volumes, it may be asserted that "it will please the superficial, improve the intelligent, and receive the hearty commendation of the serious reader. The young and the old, the lively and the sedate, will derive from it pleasure and profit."

The publishers cannot refrain from quoting the following just and happy expressions, from another publication devoted to the interests of religion. "But the view of her influence upon mankind will be exceedingly imperfect, unless we take into the estimate the whole number of individuals who have derived already, and will hereafter derive from her writings, the purest principles of religion, philosophy, and virtue. These can never be numbered, but they may safely be put down at millions. Now if all these readers gain but a single important suggestion, are incited to practise a single virtue, or to refrain from a single vice—if but one in ten is made wiser or better by her publications, how immeasurable is the good effected by her mind!"

"A soul thus active, spread out upon so wide a range of objects, impressing its own beauties and breathing its own spirit upon such myriads of kindred beings, demonstrates its own immortality, and proclaims in the history of the world the exhilarating truth, that the united acquisitions of piety, intellect, and virtue, centring their operations on that which is immortal, possess a grandeur which renders the conquests of pride and power insignificant as empty bubbles, and is more substantially glorious than the gorgeous enchantments of imperial magnificence."

PREFACE.



WHATEVER objections may be urged against the literary character of the present day, it must however be allowed to exhibit an evident improvement in some material points. It is for instance, no new observation, that vanity and flattery are now less generally ostensible even in the most indifferent authors than they were formerly in some of the best. The most self-sufficient writer is at length driven, by the prevailing sense of propriety, to be contented with *thinking* himself the prime genius of the age; but he seldom ventures to *tell* you that he thinks so. Vanity is compelled to acquire or to assume a better taste.

That spirit of independence also, which has in many respects impressed so mischievous a stamp on the public character, has perhaps helped to correct the style of prefaces and dedications. Literary patronage is so much *shorn of its beams*, that it can no longer enlighten bodies which are in themselves opaque; so much abridged of its power that it cannot force into notice a work which is not able to recommend itself. The favour of an individual no longer boasts that buoyant quality which enables that to swim which by its own nature is disposed to sink. The influence of an Augustus, or a Louis Quatorze, of a Mæcenas, a Dorset, a Halifax, could not now procure readers, much less could it compel admirers for the panegyrist, if the panegyrist himself, could command admiration on no better ground than the authority of the patron. The once dilated preface is shrunk into plain apology or simple exposition. The long and lofty dedication (generally speaking) dwindled into a sober expression of respect for public virtue, a concise tribute of affection to private friendship, or an acknowledgment for personal obligation. It is no longer necessary for the dependant to be profane in order to be grateful. No more are all the divine attributes snatched from their rightful possessor, and impiously appropriated by the needy writer to the opulent patron. He still makes indeed the eulogium of his protector, but not his apotheosis. The vainest poet of our days dare not venture, like him who has however so gloriously accomplished his own prediction, to say, in so many words, that his own work is *more sublime than the royal heights of pyramids*. Nor whatever secret compact he may make for his duration, does he openly undertake to promise for his verse, that it shall flow *coequal with the rivers and survive the established forms of the religion of his country*. The most venal poetic parasite no longer assures his protector, with 'unhappy Dryden,' that mankind can no more subsist without *his* poetry (the earl of Middlesex's poetry!) than the world can subsist without the daily course of Divine Providence. And it is but justice to the more sober spirit of living literature to observe, that our modesty would revolt (putting our sense and our religion out of the question) were a modern poet to offer even an imperial patron to pick and choose his lodging among the constellations; or, as some author has expressed it on a similar occasion, 'to ask what apartment of the zodiack he would be pleased to occupy.'

So far at least our taste is reformed. And may we not venture to hope, from the affinity which should subsist between correct judgment and unadulterated principle, that our ideas of truth and manly integrity are improved also?

But it is time that I confine myself to the more immediate objects of the present address, in which, in avoiding the exploded evil I have been reprobating, I would not affectedly run into the opposite, and perhaps prevailing extreme.

It may not, it is presumed, be thought necessary to apologise for the publication of this collection, by enumerating all the reasons which produced it. 'Desire of friends,' is now become a proverbial satire; the poet is driven from that once creditable refuge, behind which an unfounded eagerness to appear in print used to shelter itself; and is obliged to abandon the untenable forts and fastnesses of this last citadel of affectation. Dr. Johnson's sarcasm upon one plea will apply to all, and put to flight the whole hackneyed train of false excuses—'If the book were not written to be printed, I presume it was printed to be read.'

These scattered pieces, besides that they had been suffered to pass through successive editions, with little or no correction, were in their original appearance, of all shapes and sizes, and utterly unreduceable to any companionable form. Several new pieces are here added, and most of the old ones considerably altered and enlarged.

I should blush to produce so many slight productions of my early youth, did I not find reason to be still more ashamed, that after a period of so many years the progress will be found to have been so *inconsiderable*, and the difference so little apparent.

PREFACE.

If I should presume to suggest as an apology for having still persisted to publish, that of the latter productions, usefulness has been more invariably the object; whereas in many of the earlier, amusement was more obviously proposed; if I were inclined to palliate my presumption by pleading

That not in Fancy's maze I wander'd long;

it might be retorted that the implied plea, in favour of the latter publications, exhibits no sure proof of humility in this instance than in the other. That, if in the first it was no evidence of the modesty of the writer to fancy she could amuse, in the last it furnishes little proof of the modesty of the woman to fancy that she can instruct. Now to amuse, or to instruct, or both, is so undeniably the intention of all who obtrude their works on the public, that no preliminary apology, no prefatory humiliation can quite do away the charge of a certain consciousness of talents which is implied in the very undertaking. The author professes his inability but he produces his book; and by the publication itself controverts his own avowal of alleged incapacity. It is to little purpose that the words are disparaging while the deed is assuming. Nor will that profession of self-abasement be much regarded, which is contradicted by an act that supposes self-confidence.

If however there is too seldom found in the writer of the book, all the humility which the preface announces, he may be allowed to plead on humility, which is at least comparative. On this ground may I be permitted to declare, that at no period of my life did I ever feel such unfeigned diffidence at the individual appearance of even the slightest pamphlet (the slenderness of whose dimensions might carry some excuse for the small proportion of profit or pleasure it conveyed) as I now feel at sending this, perhaps too voluminous, collection into the world. This self-distrust may naturally be accounted for, by reflecting that this publication is deliberately made, not only at a time of life when I ought best to know my own faults, and the faults of my writings; but is made also at such a distance from the moment in which the several pieces were first struck out, that the mind has had time to cool from the hurry and heat of composition; the judgment has had leisure to operate, and it is the effect of that operation to rectify false notions and to correct rash conclusions. The critic, even of his own works, grows honest, if not acute at the end of twenty years. The image, which he had fancied glowed so brightly when it came fresh from the furnace, time has quenched; the spirits which he thought fixed and essential, have evaporated; many of the ideas which he imposed not only on his reader, but on himself, for originals, more reading and more observation compel him to restore to their owners. And having detected, from the perusal of abler works, either plagiarisms in his own, of which he was not aware, or coincidences which will pass for plagiarisms; and blending with the new judgment of the critic, the old indignation of the poet, who of us in this case is not angry with those who have *said our good things before us*? We not only discover that what we thought we had invented we have only remembered; but we find also that what we had believed to be perfect is full of defects; in that which we had conceived to be pure gold, we discover much tinsel. For the revision, as was observed above, is made at a period when the eye is brought by a due remoteness into that just position which gives a clear and distinct view of things; a remoteness which disperses 'the illusions of vision,' scatters the mists of vanity, reduces objects to their natural size, restores them to their exact shape, makes them appear to the sight, such as they are in themselves, and such as perhaps they have long appeared to all except the author.

That I have added to the mass of general knowledge by one original idea, or to the stock of virtue by one original sentiment, I do not presume to hope. But that I have laboured assiduously to make that kind of knowledge which is most indispensable to common life, familiar to the unlearned, and acceptable to the young; that I have laboured to inculcate into both, the love and practice of that virtue of which they had before derived the principles from higher sources, I will not deny to have attempted.

To what is called learning I have never had any pretension. Life and manners have been the objects of my unwearied observation, and every kind of study and habit has more or less recommended itself to my mind, as it had more or less reference to these objects. Considering this world as a scene of much action, and of little comparative knowledge; not as a stage for exhibition, or a retreat for speculation, but as a field on which the business which is to determine the concerns of eternity is to be transacted; as a place of low regard as an end; but of unspeakable importance as a means; a scene of short experiment, but lasting responsibility; I have been contented to pursue myself, and to present to others (to my own sex chiefly) those truths, which, if obvious and familiar, are yet practical, and of general application: things which if of little show, are yet of some use; and which, if their separate value be not great, yet their aggregate importance is not inconsiderable. I have pursued, not that which demands skill, and ensures renown, but

That which before us lies in daily life.

If I have been favoured with a measure of success, which has as much exceeded my expectation as my desert, I ascribe it partly to a disposition in the public mind to encourage, in these days of alarm, attack, and agitation, any productions of which the tendency is favourable to good order and Christian morals, even though the merit of the execution by no means keeps pace with that of the principle. In some instances I trust I have written seasonably when I have not been able to write well. Several pieces perhaps of small value in themselves have helped to supply in

PREFACE.

some inferior degree the exigence of the moment ; and have had the advantage, not of superseding the necessity, or the appearance, of abler writings, but of exciting abler writers ; who, seeing how little I had been able to say on topics upon which much might be said, have more than supplied my deficiencies by filling up what I had only superficially sketched out. On that which had only a temporary use, I do not aspire to build a lasting reputation.

In the progress of ages, and after the gradual accumulation of literary productions, the human mind—I speak not of the scholar, or the philosopher, but of the multitude—the human mind. Athenian in this one propensity, *the desire to hear and to tell some new thing*, will reject, or overlook, or grow weary even of the standard works of the most established authors ; while it will peruse with interest the current volume or popular pamphlet of the day. This hunger after novelty, by the way, is an instrument of inconceivable importance placed by Providence in the hands of every writer ; and should strike him forcibly with the duty of turning this sharp appetite to good account, by appeasing it with sound and wholesome aliment. It is not perhaps that the work in actual circulation is comparable to many works which are neglected ; but it is *new*. And let the fortunate author militant, of moderate abilities, who is banquetting on his transient, and perhaps accidental popularity, use that popularity wisely ; and, bearing in mind that he himself must expect to be neglected in his turn, let him thankfully seize his little season of fugitive renown ; let him devote his ephemeral importance, conscientiously to throw into the common stock his quota of harmless pleasure or of moral profit. Let him unaffectedly rate his humble, but not unuseful labours, at their just price, nor despondingly conclude that he has written altogether in vain, though he do not see a public revolution of manners succeed, as he had perhaps too fondly flattered himself, to the publication of his book. Let him not despair, if, though he have had many readers, he has had but few converts. Nor let him on the other hand be elated by a celebrity which he may owe more to his novelty than to his genius, more to a happy combination in the circumstances of the times, than to his own skill or care ;—and most of all, to his having diligently observed, that

There is a tide in the affairs of men ;

and to his having, accordingly, launched his bark at the favourable flow.

The well intentioned and well principled author, who has uniformly thrown all his weight, though that weight be but small, into the right scale, may have contributed his fair proportion to that great work of reformation, which will, I trust, unless a total subversion of manners should take place, be always carrying on in the world ; but which the joint concurrence of the wisdom of ages will find it hard to accomplish. Such an author may have been in his season and degree, the accepted agent of that Providence who works by many and different instruments, by various and successive means ; in the same manner as in the manual labour of the mechanic, it is not by a few ponderous strokes that great operations are effected, but by a patient and incessant following up of the blow—by reiterated and unwearied returns to the same object ; in the same manner as in the division of labour, many hands of moderate strength and ability may, by co-operation, do that which a very powerful individual might have failed to accomplish. It is the privilege of few authors to contribute largely to the general good, but almost every one may contribute something. No book perhaps is perfectly neutral ; nor are the effects of any altogether indifferent. From all our reading there will be a bias on the actings of the mind, though with a greater or less degree of inclination, according to the degree of impression made, by the nature of the subject, the ability of the writer, and the disposition of the reader. And though, as was above observed, the whole may produce no *general* effect, proportionate to the hopes of the author ; yet some truth may be picked out from among many that are neglected ; some single sentiment may be seized on for present use ; some detached principle may be treasured up for future practice.

If in the records of classic story we are told, that ‘ the most superb and lasting monument that was ever consecrated to beauty, was that to which every lover carried a tribute ; ’ then among the accumulated production of successive volumes, those which though they convey no new information, yet illustrate on the whole some old truth ; those which though they add nothing to the stores of genius or of science, yet if they help to establish and enforce a single principle of virtue, they may be accepted as an additional mite cast by the willing hand of affectionate indigence into the treasury of Christian morals.

The great father of Roman eloquence has asserted, that though every man should propose to himself the highest degrees in the scale of excellence ; yet he may stop with honour at the second or the third. Indeed the utility of some books to some persons would be defeated by their very superiority. The writer may be above the reach of his reader ; he may be too lofty to be pursued ; he may be too profound to be fathomed ; he may be too abstruse to be investigated ; for to produce delight there must be intelligence ; there must be something of concert and congruity. There must be not merely that intelligibility which arises from the perspicuousness of the author : but that also which depends on the capacity and perception of the reader. Between him who writes and him who reads, there must be a kind of coalition of interests, something of a partnership (however unequal the capital) in mental property ; a sort of joint stock of tastes and ideas. The student must have been initiated into the same intellectual commerce with him whom he studies ; for large bills are only negotiable among the mutually opulent.

There are perhaps other reasons why popularity is no infallible test of excellence. Many readers even of good faculties if those faculties have been kept inert by a disuse of exertion, feel often most

PREFACE.

sympathy with writers of a middle class; and find more repose in a mediocrity which lulls and amuses the mind, than with a loftiness and extent which exalts and expands it. To enjoy works of superlative ability, as was before suggested, the reader must have been accustomed to drink at the same spring from which the writer draws; he must be at the expense of furnishing part of his own entertainment, by bringing with him a share of the science or of the spirit with which the author writes.

These are some of the considerations, which, while my gratitude has been excited by the favourable reception of my various attempts, have helped to correct that vanity which is so easily kindled where merit and success are evidently disproportionate.

For fair criticism I have ever been truly thankful. For candid correction, from whatever quarter it came, I have always exhibited the most unquestionable proof of my regard, by adopting it. Nor can I call to mind any instance of improvement which has been suggested to me by which I have neglected to profit.* I am not insensible to human estimation. To the approbation of the wise and good I have been perhaps but too sensible. But I check myself in the indulgence of the dangerous pleasure, by recollecting that the hour is fast approaching to all, to me it is *very* fast approaching, when no human verdict, of whatever authority in itself, and however favourable to its object, will avail any thing, but inasmuch as it is crowned with the acquittal of that Judge whose favour is eternal life. Every emotion of vanity dies away, every swelling of ambition subsides before the consideration of this solemn responsibility. And though I have just avowed my deference for the opinion of private critics, and of public censors; yet my anxiety with respect to the sentence of both is considerably diminished, by the reflection, that not the writings but the writer will very soon be called to another tribunal, to be judged on far other grounds than those on which the decisions of literary statutes are framed: a tribunal, at which the sentence passed will depend on far other causes than the observation or neglect of the rules of composition; than the violation of any precepts, or the adherence to any decrees of critic legislation.

With abundant cause to be humbled at the mixed motives of even my least exceptionable writings, I am willing to hope that in those of later date, at least, vanity, has not been the governing principle. And if in sending abroad the present collection, some sparks of this inextinguishable fire should struggle to break out, let it be at once quenched by the reflection, that of those persons whose kindness stimulated, and whose partiality rewarded, my early efforts; of those who would have dwelt on these pages with most pleasure, the eyes of the greater part are closed, to open no more in this world. Even while the pen is in my hand framing this remark, more than one affecting corroboration of its truth occurs. May this reflection, at once painful and salutary, be ever at hand to curb the insolence of success, or to countervail the mortification of defeat! May it serve to purify the motives of action, while it inspires resignation to its event! And may it affect both without diminishing the energies of duty—without abating the activity of labour.

Bath, 1801.

* If it be objected that this has not been the case with respect to one single passage which has excited some controversy, it has arisen not from any want of openness to conviction in me, but from my conceiving myself to have been misunderstood, and, for that reason only, misrepresented.

Sun, moon, and stars, shall fade away,
Lost in one cloudless, endless day;
Redemption finish'd, sin forgiven,

'Tis God's own presence makes it heaven.
Of future bliss, if such the sum,
Then come, Lord Jesus ! quickly come !

SACRED DRAMAS :

CHIEFLY INTENDED FOR YOUNG PERSONS.

THE SUBJECTS TAKEN FROM THE BIBLE.

All the books of the Bible are either most admirable and exalted pieces of poetry, or the best materials in the world for it.—*Cowley*.



TO HER GRACE

THE DUTCHESS OF BEAUFORT,

THESE SACRED DRAMAS ARE, WITH THE MOST PERFECT RESPECT, INSCRIBED :

As, among the many amiable and distinguished qualities which adorn her mind, and add lustre to her rank, her excellence in the maternal character gives a peculiar propriety to her protection of this little work ; written with an humble wish to promote the love of piety and virtue in young persons,

By her grace's most obedient, most obliged, and most humble servant,
HANNAH MORE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

I AM as ready as the most rigid critic to confess, that nothing can be more simple and inartificial than the plans of the following dramas. In the construction of them I have seldom ventured to introduce any person* of my own creation : still less did I imagine myself at liberty to invent circumstances. I reflected, with awe, that *the place whereon I stood was holy ground*. All the latitude I permitted myself was, to make such persons as I selected act under such circumstances as I found, and express such sentiments as, in my humble judgment, appeared not unnatural to their characters and situations. Some of the speeches are so long as to retard the action ; for I rather aspired after moral instruction than the purity of dramatic composition. I am aware that it may be brought as an objection, that I have now and then made my Jewish characters speak too much like Christians, as it may be questioned whether I have not occasionally ascribed to them a degree of light and knowledge greater than they probably had the means of possessing : but I was more anxious in consulting the advantage of my youthful readers by leading them on to higher religious views, than in securing to myself the reputation of critical exactness.

It will be thought that I have chosen, perhaps, the least important passage in the eventful life of David, for the foundation of the drama which bears his name. Yet even in this his first exploit, the sacred historian represents him as exhibiting no mean lesson of modesty, humility, courage, and piety. Many will think that the introduction of Saul's daughter would have added to the effect of the piece : and I have no doubt but that it would have made the intrigue more complicated and amusing had this drama been intended for the stage. There, all that is tender, and all that is terrible in the passions, find a proper place. But I write for the young, in whom it will be always time enough to have the passions awakened ; I write for a class of readers, to whom it is not easy to accommodate one's subject,† so as to be at once useful and interesting.

The amiable poet,‡ from whom I have taken my motto, after showing the superiority of the sacred over the profane histories, some instances of which I have noticed in my introduction, concludes with the following remark, which I may apply to myself with far more propriety than it was used by the author :—' I am far from assuming to myself to have fulfilled the duty of this weighty undertaking ; and I shall be ambitious of no other fruit from this weak and imperfect attempt of mine, but the opening of a way to the courage and industry of some other persons, who may be better able to perform it thoroughly and successfully.'

* Never indeed, except in Daniel, and that of necessity ; as the Bible furnishes no more than two persons, Daniel and Darius, and these were not sufficient to carry on the business of the piece.

† It would not be easy, nor perhaps proper, to introduce sacred tragedies on the English stage. The pious would think it profane, while the profane would think it dull. Yet the excellent Racine, in a profligate country and a voluptuous court, ventured to adapt the story of *Athalie* to the French theatre ; and it remains to us a glorious monument of its author's courageous piety, while it exhibits the perfection of the dramatic art

‡ Cowley.

INTRODUCTION.

O for the sacred energy which struck
The harp of Jesse's son! or for a spark
Of that celestial flame which touch'd the lips
Of bless'd Isaiah :* when the Seraphim
With living fire descended, and his soul
From sin's pollution purg'd! or one faint ray,
If human things to heavenly I may join,
Of that pure spirit which inflam'd the breast
Of Milton, God's own poet! when retir'd
In fair enthusiastic vision wrapt,
The *nightly visitant* deign'd bless his couch
With inspiration, such as never flow'd
From Acidale or Aganippe's fount!
Then, when the sacred fire within him burnt,
He spake as man or angels might have spoke,
When man was purg'd, and angels were his
guests.

It will not be.—Nor prophet's burning zeal,
Nor muse of fire, nor yet to sweep the strings
With sacred energy, to me belongs;
Nor with Miltonic hand to touch the chords
That wake to ecstasy. From me, alas!
The secret source of harmony is hid;
The magic pow'rs which catch the ravish'd soul
In melody's sweet maze, and the clear streams
Which to pure fancy's yet untasted springs
Enchanted lead. Of these I little know!
Yet, all unknowing, dare thy aid invoke,
Spirit of truth! to bless these worthless lays:
Nor impious is the hope; for thou hast said,
That none who ask in faith should ask in vain.

You I invoke not now, ye fabled Nine!
I not invoke you though you well were sought
In Greece and Latium, sought by deathless
bards.

Whose syren song enchants; and shall enchant
Through time's wide circling round, tho' false
their faith,
And less than human were the gods they sung.
Though false their faith they taught the best
they knew;

And (blush, O Christians!) liv'd above their
faith.

They would have bless'd the beam and hail'd
the day

Which chas'd the moral darkness from their
souls.

O! had their minds receiv'd the clearer ray
Of Revelation, they had learn'd to scorn
Their rites impure, their less than human gods,
Their wild mythology's fantastic maze.

Pure Plato! how had thy chaste spirit hail'd
A faith so fitted to thy moral sense!
What hadst thou felt to see the fair romance
Of high imagination, the bright dream
Of thy pure fancy, more than realiz'd!
Sublime enthusiast! thou hadst blest a scheme
Fair, good, and perfect. How had thy wrapt
soul

Caught fire, and burnt with a diviner flame!
For e'en thy fair idea ne'er conceiv'd

Such plenitude of bliss, such boundless love,
As Deity made visible to sense.

Unhappy Brutus! philosophic mind!
Great 'midst the errors of the Stoic school!

How had thy kindling spirit joy'd to find
That thy lov'd virtue was no empty name:

* Isaiah, chap. vi.

Nor hadst thou met the vision at Philippi;
Nor hadst thou sheath'd thy bloody dagger's
point

Or in the breast of Cæsar or thy own.

The pagan page how far more wise than ours!
They with the gods they worshipp'd grac'd their
song:

Our song we grace with gods we disbelieve;
Retain the manners but reject the creed.
Shall fiction only raise poetic flame,
And shall no altar blaze, O Truth, to thee?
Shall falsehood only please and fable charm?
And shall eternal truth neglected lie?
Because immortal, slighted, or profan'd?
Truth has our reverence only, not our love;
Our praise, but not our hearts: a deity,
Confess'd, but shunn'd; acknowledged, not
ador'd;

Alarm'd we dread her penetrating beams:
She comes too near us, and too brightly shines.

Why shun to make our duty our delight?

Lest pleasure be the motive, disallow
All high incentives drawn from God's command;
Where shall we trace, through all the page pro-
fane,

A livelier pleasure and a purer source
Of innocent delight, than the fair book
Of holy truth presents? for ardent youth,
The sprightly narrative! for years mature,
The moral document, in sober robe
Of grave philosophy array'd: which all
Had heard with admiration, had embrac'd
With rapture, had the shades of Academe,
Or the learn'd Porch produc'd it:—Tomes had
then

Been multiplied on tomes, to draw the veil
Of graceful allegory, to unfold

Some hidden source of beauty now not felt!

Do not the pow'rs of soul-enchancing song,
Strong imagery, bold figure, every charm
Of eastern flight sublime, apt metaphor,
And all the graces in thy lovely train,
Divine simplicity! assemble all

In Zion's songs, and bold Isaiah's strain?

Why should the classic eye delight to trace
The tale corrupted from its prime pure source;
How Pyrrha and the fam'd Thessalian king
Restor'd the ruin'd race of lost mankind:
Yet turn, incurious, from the patriarch sav'd
The rescued remnant of a delug'd world?

Why are we taught, delighted to recount
Alcides' labours, yet neglect to note

Heroic Samson 'midst a life of toil
Herculean? Pain and peril marking both,
A life eventful and disastrous death.

Can all the tales which Grecian story yields;
Can all the names the Roman page records,

Of wond'rous friendship and surpassing love
Can gallant Theseus and his brave compeer

Orestes and the partner of his toils;
Achates and his friend: Euryalus

And blooming Nisus, pleasant in their lives,
And undivided by the stroke of death;

Can each, can all, a lovelier picture yield
Of virtuous friendship: can they all present

A tenderness more touching than the love
Of Jonathan and David?—Speak, ye young!

Who, undebauched as yet by fashion's lore,
And unsophisticate, unbiass'd judge:

Say, is your quick attention more arous'd

By the red plagues which wasted smitten
Thebes,
Than heav'n's avenging hand on Pharaoh's
host ?

Or do the vagrant Trojans, driven by fate
On adverse shores successive, yield a theme
More grateful to the eager appetite
Of young impatience, than the wand'ring tribes
The Hebrew leader through the desert led ?
The beauteous maid,* (though tender is the tale;) Whose guiltless blood on Aulis' altar stream'd,
Smites not the bosom with a softer pang
Than her in fate how sadly similar,
The Gileaditish virgin—victims both
Of vows unsanctify'd.—

Such are the lovely themes which court the bard,
Scarce yet essay'd in verse—for verse how meet !
While heav'n-descended song, forgetting oft
Her sacred dignity and high descent,
Debases her fair origin ; oft spreads
Corruption's deadly bane, pollutes the heart
Of innocence, and with unhallow'd hand
Presents the poison'd chalice, to the brim
Fill'd with delicious ruin, ministr'ing
The unwholesome rapture to the fever'd taste,
While its fell venom, with malignant pow'r,
Strikes at the root of Virtue, with'ring all
Her vital energy. Oh ! for some balm
Of sov'reign power, to raise the drooping Muse
To all the health of virtue ! to infuse

* Iphigenia.

A gen'rous warmth, to rouse a holy zeal
And give her high conceptions of herself,
Her dignity, her worth, her aim, her end !
For me, eternal Spirit, let thy word
My path illumine ! O thou compassionate God !
Thou know'st our frame, thou know'st we are
but dust ;
From dust a Seraph's zeal thou wilt not seek,
Nor wilt thou ask an angel's purity.
But hear, and hearing pardon ; as I strive,
Though with a feeble voice and flagging wing
A glowing heart, but pow'rless hand, to paint
The faith of favour'd man to heav'n ; to sing
The ways inscrutable of heav'n to man ;
May I, by thy celestial guidance led,
Fix deep in my own heart the truths I teach !
In my own life transcribe whate'er of good
To others I propose ! and by thy rule
Correct th' irregular,* reform the wrong,
Exalt the low, and brighten the obscure !
Still may I note, how all th' agreeing parts
Of this consummate system join to frame
One fair, one finish'd, one harmonious whole !
Trace the close links which form the perfect
chain
In beautiful connexion ; mark the scale
Whose nice gradations, with progression true,
For ever rising, end in Deity !

* What in me is dark
Illumine ! What is low, raise and support !

PARADISE LOST.

MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES.

A SACRED DRAMA.

Let me assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.—*Paradise Lost.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

HEBREW WOMEN.

JOCHEBED, mother of Moses.
MIRIAM, his sister.

EGYPTIANS.

The PRINCESS, king Pharaoh's daughter.
MELITA ; and other attendants.

Scene—On the banks of the Nile.

This subject is taken from the second chapter of the book of Exodus.

PART I.

JOCHEBED, MIRIAM.

Joch. Why was my pray'r accepted ? why did
heaven

In anger hear me, when I ask'd a son ?
Ye dames of Egypt ! ye triumphant mothers !
You no imperial tyrant marks for ruin ;
You are not doom'd to see the babes you bore,
The babes you fondly nurture, bleed before you !
You taste the transport of a mother's love,
Without a mother's anguish ! wretched Israel !
Can I forbear to mourn the different lot
Of thy sad daughters !—Why did God's own
hand

Rescue his chosen race by Joseph's care ?
Joseph ! th' elected instrument of heaven,

Decreed to save illustrious Abraham's sons,
What time the famine rag'd in Canaan's land.
Israel, who then was spar'd, must perish now !
Thou great mysterious Pow'r, who hast in-
volv'd

Thy wise decrees in darkness, to perplex
The pride of human wisdom, to confound
The daring scrutiny, and prove, the faith
Of thy presuming creatures ! hear me now :
O vindicate thy honour, clear this doubt,
Teach me to trace this maze of Providence :
Why save the fathers, if the sons must perish ?

Mir. Ah me, my mother ! whence these floods
of grief ?

Joch. My son ! my son ! I cannot speak the
rest ;

Ye who have sons can only know my fondness !

Ye who have lost them, or who fear to lose,
Can only know my pangs! none else can guess
them.

A mother's sorrows cannot be conceiv'd
But by a mother—would I were not one!

Mir. With earnest pray'rs thou didst request
this son,
And heaven has granted him.

Joch. O sad estate
Of human wretchedness; so weak is man,
So ignorant and blind, that did not God
Sometimes withhold in mercy what we ask,
We should be ruin'd at our own request.

Too well thou know'st, my child, the stern
decrees

Of Egypt's cruel king, hard-hearted Pharaoh;
That every male, of Hebrew mother born,
Must die! Oh! do I live to tell it thee!

Must die a bloody death! My child, my son,
My youngest born my darling must be slain!

Mir. The helpless innocent! and must he die?

Joch. No: if a mother's tears, a mother's
prayers,

A mother's fond precautions can prevail,
He shall not die. I have a thought my Miriam,
And sure the God of mercies who inspir'd,
Will bless the secret purpose of my soul,
To save his precious life.

Mir. Hop'st thou that Pharaoh—

Joch. I have no hope in Pharaoh, much in
God;

Much in the Rock of Ages.

Mir. Think, O think,
What perils thou already hast incurr'd,
And shun the greater which may yet remain,
Three months, three dangerous months thou
hast preserv'd

Thy infant's life, and in thy house conceal'd
him!

Should Pharaoh know!

Joch. Oh! let the tyrant know,
And feel what he inflicts! Yes, hear me, heaven!
Send thy right aiming thunderbolts—but hush,
My impious murmurs! is it not thy will;
Thou, infinite in mercy? Thou permitt'st
The seeming evil for some latent good.

Yes, I will laud thy grace, and bless thy good-
ness

For what I have, and not arraign thy wisdom
For what I fear to lose. O, I will bless thee
That Aaron will be spar'd; that my first born
Lives safe and undisturbed! that he was giv'n
me

Before this impious persecution rag'd!

Mir. And yet who knows, but the fell tyrant's
rage

May reach his precious life.

Joch. I fear for him.
For thee, for all. A doating parent lives
In many lives; through many a nerve she feels;
From child to child the quick affections spread,
Forever wand'ring, yet forever fix'd.
Nor does division weaken, nor the force
Of constant operation e'er exhaust
Parental love. All other passions change
With changing circumstances; rise or fall,
Dependent on their object; claim returns;
Live on reciprocation, and expire
Unfed by hope. A mother's fondness reigns
Without a rival, and without an end.

Mir. But say what heav'n inspires to save thy
son?

Joch. Since the dear fatal morn which gave
him birth,

I have revolv'd in my distracted mind

Each means to save his life: and many a
thought

Which fondness prompted, prudence has op-
pos'd

As perilous and rash. With these poor hands
I've fram'd a little ark of slender reeds;
With pitch and slime I have secur'd the sides.
In this frail cradle I intend to lay
My little helpless infant, and expose him
Upon the banks of the Nile.

Mir. 'Tis full of danger.

Joch. 'Tis danger to expose, and death to keep
him.

Mir. Yet, oh! reflect. Should the fierce cro-
codile,

The native and the tyrant of the Nile,
Seize the defenceless infant!

Joch. Oh forbear!

Spare my fond heart. Yet not the crocodile,
Nor all the deadly monsters of the deep,
To me are half so terrible as Pharaoh,
That heathen king, that royal murderer!

Mir. Should he escape, which yet I dare not
hope,

Each sea-born monster, yet the winds and waves
He cannot 'scape.

Joch. Know, God is every where;
Not to one narrow, partial spot confin'd:
No, not to chosen Israel: he extends
Through all the vast infinitude of space:
At his command the furious tempests rise—
The blasting of the breath of his displeasure.
He tells the world of waters when to roar;
And, at his bidding, winds and seas are calm:
In him, not in an arm of flesh, I trust;
In him, whose promise never yet has fail'd,
I place my confidence.

Mir. What must I do?

Command thy daughter; for thy words have
wak'd

An holy boldness in my youthful breast.

Joch. Go then, my Miriam, go, and take the
infant.

Buried in harmless slumbers there he lies:
Let me not see him—spare my heart that pang.
Yet sure, one little look may be indulg'd,
And I may feast my fondness with his smiles,
And snatch one last, last kiss.—No more my
heart;

That rapture would be fatal—I should keep
I could not doom to death the babe I clasp'd
Did ever mother kill her sleeping boy?
I dare not hazard it—The task be thine.

Oh! do not wake my child; remove him softly;
And gently lay him on the river's brink.

Mir. Did those magicians, whom the sons of
Egypt

Consult and think all-potent, join their skill
And was it great as Egypt's sons believe;
Yet all their secret wizard arts combin'd,
To save this little ark of bulrushes,
Thus fearfully expos'd, could not effect it.
Their spells, their incantations, and dire charms
Could not preserve it.

Joch. Know this ark is clarm'd

With incantations Pharaoh ne'er employ'd ;
With spells, which impious Egypt never knew :
With invocations to the living God,
I twisted every slender reed together,
And with a pray'r did every ozier weave.

Mir. I go.

Joch. Yet e'er thou go'st, observe me well ;
When thou hast laid him in his wat'ry bed,
O leave him not : but at a distance wait,
And mark what Heaven's high will determines
for him.

Lay him among the flags on yonder beach,
Just where the royal gardens meet the Nile.
I dare not follow him, Suspicion's eye
Would note my wild demeanor ! Miriam, yes,
The mother's fondness would betray the child.
Farewell ! God of my fathers. Oh, protect him !

PART II.

Enter MIRIAM after having deposited the child.

Mir. YES, I have laid him in his wat'ry bed,
His wat'ry grave, I fear !—I tremble still ;
It was a cruel task—still I must weep !
But ah, my mother ! who shall sooth thy griefs !
The flags and sea-weeds will awhile sustain
Their precious load ; but it must sink ere long !
Sweet babe, farewell ! Yet think not I will leave
thee :

No, I will watch thee till the greedy waves
Devour thy little bark : I'll sit me down,
And sing to thee, sweet babe ; thou can'st not
hear ;

But 'twill amuse me, while I watch thy fate.

[She sits down on a bank, and sings.]

SONG.

I.

Thou, who canst make the feeble strong,
O God of Israel, hear my song !
Not mine such notes as Egypt's daughter's
raise ;
'Tis thee, O God of Hosts, I strive to praise.

II.

Ye winds, the servants of the Lord,
Ye waves, obedient to his word,
Oh spare the babe committed to your trust ;
And Israel shall confess the Lord is just !

III.

Though doom'd to find an early grave,
This infant, Lord, thy power can save,
And he, whose death's decreed by Pharaoh's
hand,
May rise a prophet to redeem the land.

[She rises and looks out.]

What female form bends thitherward her
steps ?

Of royal port she seems ; perhaps some friend,
Rais'd by the guardian care of bounteous Hea-
ven,

To prop the falling house of Levi.—Soft !
I'll listen unperceiv'd ; these trees will hide me.

[She stands behind.]

*Enter the PRINCESS OF EGYPT, attended by a train
of ladies.*

Prin. No farther, virgins, here I mean to rest.
To taste the pleasant coolness of the breeze ;
Perhaps to bathe in this translucent stream.

Did not our holy law* enjoin th' ablution
Frequent and regular, it still were needful
To mitigate the fervours of our clime.
Melita, stay—the rest at distance wait.

[They all go out, except one]

The PRINCESS looks out.

Sure, or I much mistake, or I perceive
Upon the sedgy margin of the Nile
A chest ; entangled in the reeds it seems :
Discern'st thou aught ?

Mel. Something, but what I know not.

Prin. Go and examine what this sight may
mean. *[Exit maid.]*

MIRIAM behind.

—O blest, beyond my hopes ! he is discover'd ;
My brother will be sav'd !—who is the stranger ?
Ah ! 'tis the princess, cruel Pharaoh's daughter.
If she resemble her inhuman sire,
She must be cruel too ; yet fame reports her
Most merciful and mild.—Great Lord of all,
By whose good Spirit bounteous thoughts are
given
And deeds of love perform'd—be gracious now,
And touch her soul with mercy !

Re-enter MELITA.

Prin. Well, Melita !
Hast thou discover'd what the vessel is ?

Mel. Oh, princess, I have seen the strangest
sight !

Within the vessel lies a sleeping babe,
A fairer infant have I never seen !

Prin. Who knows but some unhappy Hebrew
woman

Has thus expos'd her infant, to evade
The stern decree of my too cruel sire.
Unhappy mothers ! oft my heart has bled
In secret anguish o'er your slaughter'd sons,
Powerless to save, yet hating to destroy.

Mel. Should this be so, my princess knows
the danger.

Prin. No danger should deter from acts of
mercy.

MIRIAM behind.

A thousand blessings on her princely head ;

Prin. Too much the sons of Jacob have en-
dur'd
From Royal Pharaoh's unrelenting hate ;
Too much our house has crush'd their alien
race.

Is 't not enough that cruel task-masters
Grind them by hard oppression ? not enough
That iron bondage bows their spirits down ?
Is 't not enough my sire his greatness owes,
His palaces, his fane's magnificent,
Those structures which the world with wonder
views,

To much insulted Israel's patient race ?
To them his growing cities owe their splendour :
Their toils fair Rameses and Pythom built ;
And shall we fill the measure of our crimes,
And crown our guilt with murder ? and shall I
Sanction the sin I hate ? forbid it, Mercy !

* The ancient Egyptians used to wash their bodies
four times every twenty-four hours

Mel. I know thy royal father fears the strength
Of this still growing race, who flourish more
The more they are oppress'd : he dreads their numbers.

Prin. Apis forbid ! Pharaoh afraid of Israel !
Yet should this outcast race, this hapless people
Ere grow to such a formidable greatness,
(Which all the gods avert whom Egypt worship)
This infant's life can never serve their cause,
Nor can his single death prevent their greatness.

Mel. Prout not to that vain hope. By weakest means

And most unlikely instrument, full oft
Are great events produc'd. This rescued child
Perhaps may live to serve his upstart race
More than an host.

Prin. How ill it does beseem
Thy tender years and gentle womanhood,
To steel thy breast to Pity's sacred touch !
So weak, so unprotected is our sex,
So constantly expos'd, so very helpless,
That did not Heaven itself enjoin compassion,
Yet human policy should make us kind,
Lest in the rapid turn of Fortune's wheel,
We live to need the pity we refuse.
Yes, I will save him—Mercy, thou hast conquer'd !

Lead on—and from the rushes we'll remove
The feeble ark which cradles this poor babe.

[The PRINCESS and her maid go out.]

MIRIAM comes forward.

How poor were words to speak my boundless joy !

The princess will protect him ; bless her, Heaven !

[She looks out after the princess, and describes her action.]

With what impatient steps she seeks the shore !
Now she approaches where the ark is laid !

With what compassion, with what angel sweetness,

She bends to look upon the infant's face !
She takes his little hand in hers—he wakes—
She smiles upon him—hark, alas ! he cries ;
Weep on, sweet babe ! weep on, till thou hast touch'd

Each chord of pity, waken'd every sense
Of melting sympathy, and stolen her soul !
She takes him in her arms—O lovely princess !
How goodness heightens beauty ! now she clasps him

With fondness to her heart, she gives him now
With tender caution to her damsel's arms :
She points her to the palace, and again
This way the princess bends her gracious steps ;
The virgin train retire and bear the child.

Re-enter the PRINCESS.

Prin. Did ever innocence and infant beauty
Plead with such dumb but powerful eloquence ?
If I, a stranger, feel these soft emotions,
What must the mother who expos'd him feel !
Go, fetch a woman of the Hebrew race,
That she may nurse the babe : and, by her garb,
Lo, such a one is here !

Mir. Princess, all hail !
Forgive the bold intrusion of thy servant,

Who stands a charm'd spectator of thy goodness.

Prin. I have redeem'd an infant from the waves,

Whom I intend to nurture as mine own.

Mir. My transports will betray me ! *[aside.]* Generous Princess !

Prin. Know'st thou a matron of the Hebrew race

To whom I may confide him ?

Mir. Well I know

A prudent matron of the house of Levi ;
Her name Jochebed, is the wife of Amram ;
Of gentle manners, fam'd throughout her tribe
For soft humanity ; full well I know
That she will rear him with a mother's love.
[Aside.] Oh truly spoke ! a mother's love indeed !

To her despairing arms I mean to give
This precious trust : the nurse shall be the mother !

Prin. With speed conduct this matron to the palace.

Yes, I will raise him up to princely greatness,
And he shall be my son ; I'll have him train'd
By choicest sages, in the deepest lore
Of Egypt's sapient son ;—his name be *Moses*,
For I have drawn him from the perilous flood.

[They go out. She kneels.]

Thou Great unseen ! who causest gentle deeds,

And smil'st on what thou causest ; thus I bless thee.

That thou did'st deign consult the tender make
Of yielding human hearts, when thou ordain'dst
Humanity a virtue ! did'st not make it
A rigorous exercise to counteract
Some strong desire within ; to war and fight
Against the powers of Nature ; but did'st bend
The nat'ral bias of the soul to mercy :
Then mad'st that mercy duty ! Gracious Power !
Mad'st the keen rapture exquisite as right ;
Beyond the joys of sense ; as pleasure sweet,
As reason vigorous, and as instinct strong !

PART III.

Enter JOCHEBED.

I've almost reach'd the place—with cautious steps

I must approach the spot where he is laid,
Lest from the royal gardens any 'spy me :
—Poor babe ! ere this the pressing calls of hunger

Have broke thy short repose ; the chilling waves,
Ere this have drench'd thy little shiv'ring limbs.
What must my babe have suffer'd !—No one sees me !

But soft, does no one listen !—Ah ! how hard,
How very hard for fondness to be prudent !
Now is the moment to embrace and feed him,

[She looks out]
Where's Miriam ? she has left her little charge,
Perhaps through fear ; perhaps she was detected.
How wild is thought ! how terrible is conjecture !
A mother's fondness frames a thousand fears,
With thrilling nerve feels every real ill,

And shapes imagin'd miseries into being.

[*She looks towards the river.*]

Ah me! where is he? soul-distracting sight!
He is not there—he's lost, he's gone, he's
drown'd!

Toss'd by each beating surge my infant floats.
Cold, cold, and wat'ry is thy grave, my child!
O no—I see the ark—transporting sight!

[*She goes towards it.*]

I have it here—Alas, the ark is empty!
The casket's left, the precious gem is gone!
You spar'd him, pitying spirits of the deep!
But vain your mercy; some insatiate beast,
Cruel as Pharaoh, took the life you spar'd—
And I shall never, never see my boy!

Enter MIRIAM.

Joch. Come and lament with me thy brother's
loss!

Mir. Come and adore with me the God of
Jacob!

Joch. Miriam—the child is dead!

Mir. He lives! he lives!

Joch. Impossible—Oh, do not mock my grief!
See'st thou that empty vessel?

Mir. From that vessel

Th' Egyptian princess took him.

Joch. Pharaoh's daughter?

Then still he will be slain: a bloodier death
Will terminate his woes.

Mir. His life is safe;

For know, she means to rear him as her own.

Joch. [*Falls on her knees in rapture.*]

To God, the Lord, the glory be ascrib'd!

O magnify'd forever be thy might
Who mock'st all human forethought! who o'er-
rulest

The hearts of all sinners to perform thy work,
Defeating their own purpose! who canst plant
Unlook'd-for mercy in a heathen's heart,
And from the depth of evil bring forth good!

[*She rises.*]

Mir. O blest event, beyond our warmest hopes!

Joch. What! shall my son be nurtur'd in a
court,

In princely grandeur bred? taught every art
And ev'ry wond'rous science Egypt knows?

Yet ah! I tremble Miriam; should he learn,
With Egypt's polish'd arts her baneful faith!

O worse exchange for death! yes, should he
learn

In yon proud palace to disown His hand

Who thus has sav'd him: should he e'er em-
brace

(As sure he will, if bred in Pharaoh's court)

The gross idolatries which Egypt owns,

Her graven images, her brutish gods,

Then shall I wish he had not been preserv'd

To shame his fathers and deny his faith.

Mir. Then to dispel thy fears and crown thy
joy,

Hear farther wonders—Know, the gen'rous
princess

To thine own care thy darling child commits.

Joch. Speak, while my joy will give me leave
to listen!

Mir. By her commission'd, thou behold'st me

To seek a matron of the Hebrew race

To nurse him: thou, my mother, art that matron
I said I knew thee well; that thou would'st rear
him,

E'en with a mother's fondness; she who bare
him

(I told the princess) would not love him more.

Joch. Fountain of Mercy! whose pervading
eye

Can look within and read what passes there,
Accept my thoughts for thanks! I have no
words.

My soul, o'erfraught with gratitude, rejects
The aid of language—Lord! behold my heart.

Mir. Yes, thou shalt pour into his infant mind
The purest precepts of the purest faith.

Joch. O! I will fill his tender soul with virtue,
And warm his bosom with devotion's flame!

Aid me celestial Spirit! with thy grace,
And be my labours with thy influence crown'd!

Without it they were vain. Then, then, my
Miriam,

When he is furnish'd 'gainst the evil day,
With God's whole armour,* girt with sacred
truth,

And as a breastplate wearing righteousness,
Arm'd with the Spirit of God, the shield of faith,

And with the helmet of salvation crown'd,
Inur'd to watching and dispos'd to prayer;

Then may I send him to a dangerous court,
And safely trust him in a perilous world,

Too full of tempting snares and fond delusions!

Mir. May bounteous Heav'n thy pious cares
reward!

Joch. O Amram! O my husband! when thou
com'st,

Wearied at night, to rest thee from the toils
Impos'd by haughty Pharaoh, what a tale

Have I to tell thee! Yes: thy darling son
Was lost, and is restor'd; was dead, and lives!

Mir. How joyful shall we spend the live-long
night

In praises to Jehovah; who thus mocks

All human foresight, and converts the means
Of seeming ruin into great deliverance!

Joch. Had not my child been doom'd to such
strange perils

As a fond mother trembles to reveal,
He had not been preserv'd.

Mir. And mark still farther;

Had he been sav'd by any other hand,

He had been still expos'd to equal ruin.

Joch. Then let us join to bless the hand of
Heaven,

That this poor outcast of the house of Israel,
Condemn'd to die by Pharaoh, kept in secret

By my advent'rous fondness; then expos'd
E'en by that very fondness which conceal'd

him,

Is now, to fill the wondrous round of mercy,
Preserv'd from perishing by Pharaoh's daughter,

Sav'd by the very hand which sought to crush
him.

Wise and unsearchable are all thy ways,
Thou God of Mercies—Lead me to my child

* These, chap 5. Ephes. chap. vi.

DAVID AND GOLIATH;

A SACRED DRAMA.

O bienheureux mille fois,
 L'Enfant que le Seigneur aime,
 Qui de bonne heure entend sa voix,
 Et que ce Dieu diigne instruire lui-même !
 Loin du monde eleve ; de tous les dons des Cieur,
 Il est orne des sa naissance ;
 Et du mechant l'abord contagieux
 N'altere point son innocence.—*Athalie.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

SAUL, king of Israel.	ELIAB,	} sons of Jesse.	GOLIATH, the Philistian giant.
ABNER, his general.	ABINADAB,		Philistines, Israelites, &c. &c.
JESSE.	DAVID,		Chorus of Hebrew women.

The scene lies in the camp in the valley of Elah, and the adjacent plain.

The subject is taken from the seventh chapter of the First Book of Samuel.

PART I.

SCENE—A shepherd's tent on a plain.

DAVID, under a spreading tree, plays on his harp and sings.

I.

GREAT Lord of all things ! Pow'r divine !

Breathe on this erring heart of mine

Thy grace serene and pure ;

Defend my frail, my erring youth,

And teach me this important truth,

The humble are secure !

II.

Teach me to bless my lowly lot,

Confin'd to this paternal cot,

Remote from regal state !

Content to court the cooling glade,

Inhale the breeze, enjoy the shade,

And love my humble fate.

III.

No anxious vigils here I keep,

No dreams of gold distract my sleep,

Nor lead my heart astray ;

Nor blasting Envy's tainted gale

Pollutes the pleasures of the vale,

To vex my harmless day.

IV.

Yon tow'r which rears its head so high,

And bids defiance to the sky,

Invites the hostile winds :

Yon branching oak extending wide,

Provokes destruction by its pride,

And courts the fall it finds.

V.

Then let me shun th' ambitious deed,

And all the dang'rous paths which lead

To honours falsely won ;

Lord ! in thy sure protection blest,

Submissive will I ever rest,

And may thy will be done !

[*He lays down his harp and rises.*]

David. Methinks this shepherd's life were
 dull and tasteless

Without the charm of soothing song or harp :

With it, not undelightful is the haunt
 Of wood, or lonely grove, or russet plain,
 Made vocal by the Muse. With this lov'd harp,
 This daily solace of my cares, I sooth'd
 The melancholy monarch, when he lay
 Smit by the chill and spirit-quenching hand
 Of black despair. God of my fathers, hear me !
 Here I devote my harp, my verse, myself,
 To thy best service ! gladly to proclaim
 Glory to God on high, on earth good-will
 To man ; to pour my grateful soul before thee ;
 To sing thy pow'r, thy wisdom, and thy love,
 And ev'ry gracious attribute ; to paint
 The charms of heaven-born Virtue ! So shall I
 (Though with long interval of worth) aspire
 To imitate the work of saints above,
 Of Cherub and of Seraphim. My heart,
 My talents, all I am, and all I have,
 Is thine, O Father ! Gracious Lord, accept
 The humble dedication ! Offer'd gifts
 Of slaughter'd bulls and goats sacrificial
 Thou hast refus'd : but lo, I come, O Lord !
 To do thy will ; the living sacrifice
 Of an obedient heart I lay before thee :
 This humble off'ring more shall please thee,
 Lord,

Than horned bullocks, ceremonial rites,
 New moons, and Sabbaths, passovers, and fasts !
 Yet those I too will keep ; but not in lieu
 Of holiness substantial, inward worth ;
 As commutation cheap for pious deeds
 And purity of life, but as the types
 Of better things ; as fair external signs
 Of inward holiness and secret truth.

But see, my father, good old Jesse comes !
 To cheer the setting evening of whose life,
 Content, a simple shepherd here I dwell,
 Though Israel is in arms ; and royal Saul,
 Encamp'd in yonder field, defies Philistia.

JESSE, DAVID.

Jesse. Blest be the gracious pow'r who gave
 my age
 To boast a son like thee ! Thou art the staff

Which props my bending years, and makes me
bear

The heavy burden of declining age
With fond complacency. How unlike thy fate,
O venerable Eli ! But two sons,
But only two to gild the dim remains
Of life's departing day, and bless thy age,
And both were curses to thee ! Witness, Heaven,
In all the cruel catalogue of pains
Humanity turns o'er, if there be one
So terrible to human tenderness
As an unnatural child !

David. O ! my lov'd father !
Long may'st thou live, in years and honours
rich ;

To taste and to communicate the joys,
The thousand fond endearing charities,
Of tenderness domestic ; Nature's best
And loveliest gift, with which she well atones
The niggard boon of fortune.

Jesse. O ! my son !
Of all the graces which adorn thy youth,
I, with a father's fondness, must commend
Thy try'd humility. For though the seer
Pour'd on thy chosen head, the sacred oil
In sign of future greatness, in sure pledge
Of highest dignity, yet here thou dwell'st
Content with toil and careless of repose ;
And (harder still for an ingenuous mind)
Content to be obscure ; content to watch
With careful eye, thy humble father's flock !
O earthly emblem of celestial things !

So Israel's shepherd watches o'er his fold :
The weak ones in his fost'ring bosom bears :
And gently leads in his sustaining hand,
The feeble ones with young.

David. Know'st thou, my father,
Aught from the field ? for though so near the
camp,

Though war's proud ensigns stream on yonder
plain,

And all Philistia's swarming hosts encamp,
Oppos'd to royal Saul, beneath whose banners
My brothers lift the spear—I have not left
My fleecy charge, by thee committed to me,
To learn the various fortunes of the war.

Jesse. And wisely hast thou done. Thrice
happy realm,

Who shall submit one day to his command
Who can so well obey ! Obedience leads
To certain honours. Not the tow'ring wing
Of eagle-plum'd ambition mounts so surely
To fortune's highest summit, as obedience.

[*A distant sound of trumpets.*]
But why that sudden ardour, O my son ?

That trumpet's sound (though so remote its
voice,

We hardly catch the echo as it dies)
Has rous'd the mantling crimson in thy cheek,
Kindled the martial spirit in thine eye ;
And my young shepherd feels an hero's fire !

David. Thou hast not told the posture of the
war,

And much my beating bosom pants to hear.

Jesse. Uncertain is the fortune of the field.
I tremble for thy brothers, thus expos'd
To constant peril ; nor for them alone
Does the quick feeling agonize my heart.
I feel for all !—I mourn, that ling'ring War
Still hangs his banner o'er my native land.

Belov'd Jerusalem ! O War ! what art thou ?
At once the proof and scourge of man's fall'n
state !

After the brightest conquest, what appears
Of all thy glories ? for the vanquish'd, chains !
For the proud victor, what ? Alas ! to reign
O'er desolated nations ! a drear waste,
By one man's crime, by one man's lust of pow'r,
Unpeopled ! Ravag'd fields assume the place
Of smiling harvests, and uncultur'd plains
Succeed the fertile vineyard ; barren waste
Deforms the spot once rich with luscious fig
And the fat olive.—Devastation reigns.

Here, rifled temples are the cavern'd dens
Of savage beasts, or haunt of birds obscene ;
There, pop'lous cities blacken in the sun,
And in the general wreck, proud palaces
Lie undistinguish'd save by the dun smoke
Of recent conflagration. When the song
Of dear-bought joy, with many a triumph
swell'd,

Salutes the victor's ear, and soothes his pride,
How is the grateful harmony profan'd
With the sad dissonance of virgin's cries,
Who mourn their brothers slain ! of matrons
hoar,

Who clasp their wither'd hands, and fondly ask,
With iteration shrill, their slaughter'd sons !
How is the laurel's verdure stain'd with blood,
And soil'd with widows' tears !

David. Thrice mournful truth !
Yet when our country's sacred rights are
menac'd ;

Her firm foundations shaken to their base ;
When all we love, and all that we revere,
Our hearths and altars, children, parents, wives,
Our liberties and laws ; the throne they guard,
Are scorn'd and tramp'd on—then, then, my
father !

'Tis then Religion's voice ; then God himself
Commands us to defend his injur'd name,
And think the victory cheaply bought with life
'Twere then inglorious weakness, mean self-
love :

To lie inactive, when the stirring voice
Of the shrill trumpet wakes the patriot youth,
And, with heroic valour, bids them dare
The foul idolatrous bands, e'en to the death.

Jesse. God and thy country claim the life
they gave ;

No other cause can sanctify resentment.

David. Sure virtuous friendship is a noble
cause !

O were the princely Jonathan in danger,
How would I die, well pleas'd, in his defence ;
When, 'twas long since, then but a stripling boy
I made short sojourn in his father's palace,
(At first to soothe his troubled mind with song
His armour-bearer next) I well remember
The gracious bounties of the gallant prince.
How would he sit, attentive to my strain,
While to my harp I sung the harmless joys
Which crown a shepherd's life ! How would he
cry,

Bless'd youth ! far happier in thy native worth,
Far richer in the talent Heav'n has lent thee,
Than if a crown hung o'er thy anxious brow.
The jealous monarch mark'd our growing
friendship ;

And as my favour grew with those about him,

His royal bounty lessen'd, till at length,
For Beth'hem's safer shades I left the court.
Nor would these alter'd features now be known,
Grown into manly strength; nor this chang'd
form,

Enlarg'd with age, and clad in russet weed.
Jesse. I have employment for thee, my lov'd
son!

Will please thy active spirit. Go, my boy!
Haste to the field of war, to yonder camp,
Where in the vale of Elah mighty Saul
Commands the hosts of Israel. Greet thy bro-
thers;

Observe their deeds, note their demeanour well,
And mark if on their actions Wisdom waits.
Bear to them too (for well the waste of war
Will make it needful) such plain healthful viands
As furnish out our frugal shepherd's meal.
And to the valiant captain of their host
Present such rural gifts as suit our fortune:
Heap'd on the board within my tent thou'lt find
them.

David. With joy I'll bear thy presents to my
brothers;

And to the valiant captain of their host
The rural gifts thy gratitude assigns him.
Delightful task!—for I shall view the camp!
What transport to behold the tented field,
The pointed spear, the blaze of shields and arms,
And all the proud accoutrements of war!
But, oh! far dearer transport would it yield me,
Could this right arm alone avenge the cause
Of injur'd Israel! could my single death
Preserve the guiltless thousands doom'd to bleed!

Jesse. Let not thy youth be dazzled, O my
son!

With deeds of bold emprise, as valour only
Were virtue, and the gentle arts of peace,
Of truth, and justice, were not worth thy care.
When thou shalt view the splendours of the war,
The gay carapison, the burnish'd shield,
The plume-crown'd helmet, and the glitt'ring
spear,

Scorn not the humble virtues of the shade,
Nor think that Heav'n views only with applause
The active merit and the busy toil
Of heroes, statesmen, and the bustling sons
Of public care. These have their just reward,
In wealth, in honours, and the well-earned fame
Their high achievements bring. 'Tis in this
view

That virtue is her proper recompence:
Wealth, as its natural consequence, will flow
From industry: toil with success is crown'd:
From splendid actions high renown will spring.
Such is the usual course of human things;
For Wisdom Infinite permits, that thus
Effects to causes be proportionate,
And nat'ral ends by nat'ral means achiev'd.
But in the future estimate which Heaven
Will make of things terrestrial, know, my son,
That no inferior blessing is reserv'd
For the mild passive virtues: meek content,
Heroic self-denial, nobler far
Than all th' achievements noisy Fame reports,
When her shrill trumpet proclaims the proud suc-
cess

Which desolates the nations. But, on earth,
These are not always prosperous—mark the
cause:

Eternal Justice keeps them for the bliss
Of final recompence, for the dread day
Of gen'ral retribution. O, my son!
The ostentatious virtues which still press
For notice and for praise; the brilliant deeds
Which live but in the eye of observation,
These have their meed at once. But there's a
joy

To the fond votaries of Fame unknown,
To hear the still small voice of Conscience speak
Its whispering plaudit to the silent soul.
Heaven notes the sigh afflicted Goodness heaves;
Hears the low plaint by human ear unheard,
And from the cheek of patient Sorrow wipes
The tear, by mortal eye unseen or scorn'd.

David. As Hermon's dews their grateful
freshness shed,

And cheer the herbage, and the flow'rs renew,
So do thy words a quickening balm infuse,
And grateful sink in my delighted soul.

Jesse. Go then, my child! and may the gra-
cious God

Who bless'd our fathers, bless my much lov'd
son!

David. Farewell, my father!—and of this be
sure,

That not one precept from thy honour'd lips
Shall fall by me unnotic'd; not one grace,
One venerable virtue which adorns
Thy daily life, but I, with watchful care
And due observance, will in mine transplant it.

[Exit DAVID.]

Jesse. He's gone! and still my aching eyes
pursue

And strain their orbs still longer to behold him.
Oh! who can tell when next I may embrace
him?

Who can declare the counsels of the Lord?
Or when the moment preordain'd by Heav'n
To fill his great designs, may come? This son,
This blessing of my age, is set apart
For high exploits; the chosen instrument
Of all-disposing Heav'n for mighty deeds.
Still I recall the day, and to my mind
The scene is ever present, when the seer,
Illustrious Samuel, to the humble shades
Of Bethlehem came, pretending sacrifice,
To screen his errand from the jealous king.
He sanctify'd us first, me and my sons;
For sanctity increas'd should still precede
Increase of dignity. When he declar'd
He came commission'd from on high to find,
Among the sons of Jesse, Israel's king,
Astonishment entranc'd my wond'ring soul!
Yet was it not a wild, tumultuous bliss;
Such rash delight as promis'd honours yield
To light vain minds: no, 'twas a doubtful joy,
Chastis'd by tim'rous Virtue, lest a gift
So splendid and so dang'rous might destroy
Him it was meant to raise. My eldest born,
Eliab, tall of stature, I presented;
But God, who judges not by outward form,
But tries the heart, forbade the holy prophet
To choose my eldest born. For Saul, he said,
Gave proof, that fair proportion, and the grace
Of limb and feature, ill repaid the want
Of virtue. All my other sons alike
By Samuel were rejected; till, at last,
On my young boy, on David's chosen head,
The prophet pour'd the consecrated oil.

Yet ne'er did pride elate him, ne'er did scorn
For his rejected elders swell his heart.
Not in such gentle charity to him
His haughtier brothers live : but all he pardons.
To meditation, and to humble toil,
To pray'r, and praise devoted, here he dwells.
O may the Graces which adorn retreat
One day delight a court ! record his name
With saints and prophets, dignify his race,
And may the sacred songs his leisure frames
Instruct mankind, and sanctify a world !

PART II.

Scene—The Camp.

ELIAS, ABINADAB, ABNER, ISRAELITES.

Eliab. Still is the event of this long war uncertain :

Still do the adverse hosts, on either side,
Protract, with ling'ring caution, an encounter,
Which must to one be fatal.

Abinadab. This descent,
Thus to the very confines of our land,
Proclaims the sanguine hope that fires the foe.
In Ephes-dammim boldly they encamp ;
Th' uncircumcis'd Philistines pitch their tents
On Judah's hallow'd earth.

Eliab. Full forty days
Has the insulting giant, proud Goliath,
The champion of Philistia, fiercely challeng'd
Some Israelitish foe. But who so vain
To dare such force unequal ? who so bent
On sure destruction, to accept his terms,
And rush on death, beneath the giant force
Of his enormous bulk ?

Abinadab. 'Tis near the time
When in the adjacent valley which divides
Th' opposing armies he is wont to make
His daily challenge.

Eliab. Much I marvel, brother,
No greetings from our father reach our ears.
With ease and plenty bless'd, he little recks
The daily hardships which his sons endure.
But see ! behold his darling boy approaches !

Abin. How, David here ! whence this un-
look'd-for guest ?

Eliab. A spy upon our actions ; sent, no doubt,
To scan our deeds, with beardless gravity
Affecting wisdom ; to observe each word,
To magnify the venial faults of youth,
And construe harmless mirth to foul offence.

Enter DAVID.

David. All hail, my dearest brothers !

Eliab. Means thy greeting
True love, or arrogant scorn ?

David. O, most true love !
Sweet as the precious ointment which bedew'd
The sacred head of Aaron, and descended
Upon his hallow'd vest, so sweet, my brothers,
Is fond fraternal amity ; such love
As my touch'd bosom feels at your approach.

Eliab. Still that fine glozing speech, those
holy saws,

And all that trick of studied sanctity,
Of smooth-turn'd periods and trim eloquence,
Which charms thy doating father ! But confess,

What dost thou here ? Is it to sooth thy pride,
And gratify thy vain desire to roam
In quest of pleasures unallow'd ? or com'st thou,
A willing spy, to note thy brothers' deeds ?
Where hast thou left those few poor straggling
sheep ?

More suited to thy ignorance and years
The care of those, than here to wander idly :
Why cam'st thou hither ?

David. Is there not a cause ?
Why that displeasure kindling in thine eye,
My angry brother ? why those taunts unkind ?
Not idly bent on sport ; not to delight
Mine eye with all this gay parade of war ;
To gratify a roving appetite,
Or fondly to indulge a curious ear
With any tale of rumour, am I come ;
But to approve myself a loving brother.
I bring the blessing of your aged sire,
With gifts of such plain eates and rural viands
As suit his frugal fortune. Tell me now,
Where the bold captain of your host encamps ?

Eliab. Wherefore inquire ? what boots it thee
to know ?

Behold him there : great Abner, fam'd in arms.

David. I bring thee, mighty Abner from my
father,

(A simple shepherd swain in yonder vale)
Such humble gifts as shepherd swains bestow.

Abner. Thanks, gentle youth ! with pleasure
I receive

The grateful off'ring. Why does thy quick eye
Thus wander with unsatisf'd delight ?

David. New as I am to all the trade of war
Each sound has novelty ; each thing I see
Attracts attention ; every noise I hear
Awakes confus'd emotions ; indistinct,
Yet full of charming tumult, sweet distraction
'Tis all delightful hurry ! Oh ! the joy
Of young ideas painted on the mind,
In the warm glowing colours fancy spread
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely ! Ah ! what warlike sound
Salutes my ravish'd ear ?

[*Sound of trumpets.*]

Abner. 'Tis the Philistine

Proclaiming, by his herald, through the ranks,
His near approach. Each morning he repeats
His challenge to our bands.

David. Ha ! what Philistine ?
Who is he ?

Eliab. Wherefore ask ? for thy raw youth
And rustic ignorance, 'twere fitter learn
Some rural art ! some secret to prevent
Contagion in thy flocks ; some better means
To save their fleece immaculate. Those mean
arts

Of soft inglorious peace far better suit
Thy low obscurity, than thus to seek
High things pertaining to exploits of arms.

David. Urg'd as I am I will not answer thee
Who conquers his own spirit, O my brother !
He is the only conqueror.—Again
That shout mysterious ! Pray you (to *Abner*) tell
me who

This proud Philistine is, who sends defiance
To Israel's hardy chieftians ?

Abner. Stranger youth !
So lovely and so mild is thy demeanor,
So gentle and so patient ; such the air

Of candour and of courage which adorns
Thy blooming features, thou hast won my love :
And I will tell thee.

David. Mighty Abner, thanks !

Abner. Thrice, and no more, he sounds, his
daily rule !

This man of war, this champion of Philistia,
Is of the sons of Anak's giant-race :
Goliath is his name. His fearful stature,
Unparall'd in Israel, measures more
Than twice three cubits. On his tow'ring head
A helm of burnish'd brass the giant wears,
So pond'rous, it would crush the stoutest man
In all our hosts. A coat of mailed armour
Guards his capacious trunk ! compar'd with
which,

The amplest oak that spreads his rugged arms
In Bashan's groves, were small. About his
neck

A shining corslet hangs. On his vast thigh
The plaited cuiras, firmly jointed, stands.
But who shall tell the wonders of his spear,
And hope to gain belief ! Of massive iron
Its temper'd frame, not less than the broad beam
To which the busy weaver hangs his loom :
Not to be wielded by a mortal hand,
Save by his own. An armour bearer walks
Before this mighty, champion, in his hand
Bearing the giant's shield. Thrice ev'ry morn
His herald sounds the trumpet of defiance !
Off'ring at once to end the long-drawn war
In single combat 'gainst that hardy foe
Who dares encounter him.

David. Say, mighty Abner,
What are the haughty terms of his defiance ?

Abner. Proudly he stalks around th' extre-
mest bounds

Of Elah's vale. His herald sounds the note
Of offer'd battle. Then the furious giant,
With such a voice as from the troubled sky
In vollied thunder breaks, thus sends his chal-
lenge :

'Why do you set your battle in array,
Ye men of Israel ? Wherefore waste the lives
Of needless thousands ? Why protract a war
Which may at once be ended ? Are not you
Servants to Saul your king ? and am not I
With triumph let me speak it, a Philistine ?
Choose out a man from all your armed hosts,
Of courage most approv'd, and I will meet him ;
His single arm to mine. Th' event of this
Shall fix the fate of Israel and Philistia.
If victory favour him, then will we live
Your tributary slaves ; but if my arm
Be crown'd with conquest, you shall then live
ours.

Give me a man, if your effeminate bands
A man can boast. Your armies I defy !'

David. What shall be done to him who shall
subdue

This vile idolater ?

Abner. He shall receive
Such ample bounties, such profuse rewards,
As might inflame the old, or warm the coward,
Were not the odds so desperate.

David. Say, what are they ?

Abner. The royal Saul has promis'd that
bold hero

Who should encounter and subdue Goliath,
AN dignity and favour ; that his house

Shall be set free from tribute, and ennobled
With the first honours Israel has to give.
As for the gallant conqueror himself,
No less a recompence than the fair princess,
Our monarch's peerless daughter.

David. Beauteous Michael !

It is indeed a boon which kings might strive
for.

And has none answer'd yet this bold defiance ?
What ! all this goodly host of Israelites !
God's own peculiar people ! all afraid,
T' assert God's injur'd honour and their own ?
Where is the king, who in his early youth
Wrought deeds of fame ! Where princely Jona-
than ?

Not so the gallant youth Philistia fear'd
At Bozez and at Senah ;* when the earth
Shook from her deep foundations to behold
The wond'rous carnage of his single hand
On the uncircumcis'd. When he exclaim'd,
With glorious confidence—'Shall numbers awe
me ?

God will protect his own : with him to save
It boots not, friends, by many or by few.'
This was an hero ! Why does he delay
To meet this boaster ? For thy courtesy,
Thrice noble Abner, I am bound to thank thee !
Wouldst thou complete thy gen'rous offices ?
I dare not ask it.

Abner. Speak thy wishes freely :
My soul inclines to serve thee.

David. Then, O Abner,
Conduct me to the king ! There is a cause
Will justify this boldness !

Eliab. Braggard, hold !

Abner. I take thee at thy word ; and will,
with speed,

Conduct thee to my royal master's presence.
In yonder tent the anxious monarch waits
Th' event of this day's challenge.

David. Noble Abner,
Accept my thanks. Now to thy private ear,
If so thy grace permit I will unfold
My secret soul, and ease my lab'ring breast,
Which pants with high designs, and beats for
glory.

PART III.

Scene.—Saul's tent.

Saul. Why was I made a king ? what I have
gain'd

In envy'd greatness and uneasy pow'r,
I've lost in peace of mind, in virtue lost !
Why did deceitful transports fire my soul
When Samuel plac'd upon my youthful brow
The crown of Israel ? I had known content,
Nay happiness, if happiness unmix'd
To mortal man were known, had I still liv'd
Among the humble tents of Benjamin.
A shepherd's occupation was my joy,
And every guiltless day was crown'd with peace,
But now, a sullen cloud forever hangs
O'er the faint sunshine of my brightest hours,
Dark'ning the golden promise of the morn.
I ne'er shall taste the dear domestic joys

* 1 Samuel, xiv.

My meanest subjects know. True, I have sons,
Whose virtues would have charm'd a private
man,

And drawn down blessings on their humble sire.
I love their virtues too; but 'tis a love
Which jealousy has poison'd. Jonathan
Is all a father's fondness could conceive
Of amiable and good—Of that no more!
He is too popular; the people doat
Upon th' ingenuous graces of his youth.
Curs'd popularity! which makes a father
Detest the merit of a son he loves,
How did their fond idolatry, perforce,
Rescue his sentenc'd life, when doom'd by lot
To perish at Beth-aven,* for the breach
Of strict injunction, that of all my bands,
Not one that day should taste of food and live!
My subjects clamour at this tedious war,
Yet of my num'rous arm'd chiefs not one
Has courage to engage this man of Gath.
O for a champion bold enough to face
This giant-boaster, whose repeated threats
Strike through my inmost soul! There was a
time—

Of that no more! I am not what I was.
Should valiant Jonathan accept the challenge,
'Twould but increase his influence, raise his
fame,

And make the crown sit lightly on my brow.
Ill could my wounded spirit brook the voice
Of harsh comparison 'twixt sire and son.

SAUL, ABNER.

Abner. What meditation holds thee thus
engag'd,

O king! and keeps thine active spirit bound;
When busy war for other cares demands
Than ruminating thought and pale despair?

Saul. Abner draw near. My weary soul sinks
down

Beneath the heavy pressure of misfortune.
O for that spirit which inflam'd my breast
With sudden fervour, when, among the seers
And holy sages my prophetic voice
Was heard attentive, and th' astonish'd throng,
Woud'ring, exclaim'd,—'Is Saul among the
prophets?'

Where's that bold arm which quell'd the Amale-
kite,

And nobly spar'd fierce Agag and his flocks?
'Tis past! the light of Israel now is quench'd:
Shorn of his beams, my sun of glory sets!
Rise Moab, Edom, angry Ammon rise!
Come Gaza, Ashdod come! let Ekron boast,
And Askelon rejoice, for Saul is—nothing.

Abner. I bring thee news, O king!

Saul. My valiant uncle!
What can avail thy news? A soul oppress'd
Refuses still to hear the charmer's voice,
Howe'er enticingly he charm. What news
Can soothe my sickly soul, while Gath's fell
giant

Repeats each morning to my frighten'd hosts
His daring challenge, none accepting it?

Abner. It is accepted.

Saul. Ha! By whom? how? when?
What prince, what gen'ral, what illustrious
hero,

What vet'ran chief, what warrior of renown,
Will dare to meet the haughty foes defiance?
Speak, my brave gen'ral! noble Abner speak!

Abner. No prince, no warrior, no illustrious
chief,

No vet'ran hero dares accept the challenge;
But what will move thy wonder, mighty king,
One train'd to peaceful deeds, and new to arms,
A simple shepherd swain!

Saul. O mockery!

No more of this light tale, it suits but ill
Thy bearded gravity: or rather tell it
To credulous age, or weak believing women;
They love whate'er is marvellous, and doat
On deeds prodigious and incredible,
Which sober sense rejects. I laugh to think
Of thy extravagance. A shepherd's boy
Encounter him whom nations dread to meet!

Abner. Is valour then peculiar to high birth?
If Heav'n had so decreed, know, scornful king,
That Saul the Benjamite had never reign'd.
No!—Glory darts her soul-pervading ray
On thrones and cottages, regardless still
Of all the artificial, nice distinctions
Vain human customs make.

Saul. Where is this youth?

Abner. Without thy tent he waits. Such
humble sweetness,
Fir'd with the secret conscience of desert;
Such manly bearing, temper'd with such soft-
ness,

And so adorn'd with ev'ry outward charm
Of graceful form and feature, saw I never.

Saul. Bring me the youth.

Abner. He waits thy royal pleasure.

[*Exit Abner.*
Saul. What must I think? Abner himself is
brave,

And skill'd in human kind: nor does he judge
So lightly, to be caught by specious words
And Fraud's smooth artifice, were there not
marks

Of worth intrinsic. But behold he comes!
The youth too with him! Justly did he praise
The candour which adorns his open brow.

Re-enter Abner and David.

David. Hail mighty king!

Abner. Behold thy proffer'd champion!

Saul. Art thou the youth whose high heroic
zeal

Aspires to meet the giant son of Anak?

David. If so the king permit.

Saul. Impossible!

Why, what experience has thy youth of arms?
Where, stripling, didst thou learn the trade of
war?

Beneath what hoary vet'ran hast thou serv'd?
What feats hast thou achiev'd, what daring
deeds?

What well-rang'd phalanx, say, what charging
hosts,

What hard campaigns, what sieges hast thou
seen?

Hast thou e'er scal'd the city's rampir'd wall
Or hurl'd the missile dart, or learn'd to poise
The warrior's deathful spear? The use of targe,
Of helm, and buckler, is to thee unknown.

David. Arms I have seldom seen. I little
know

Of war's proud discipline. The trumpet's clang,
The shock of charging hosts, the rampir'd wall,
Th' embattled phalanx, and the warrior's spear,
The use of targe and helm to me is new.
My zeal for God, my patriot love of Israel,
My reverence for my king, behold my claims!

Saul. But gentle youth! thou hast no fame in arms,

Renown, with her shrill clarion, never bore
Thy honour'd name to many a land remote;
From the fair regions where Euphrates lavas
Assyria's borders to the distant Nile.

David. True, mighty king! I am indeed alike
Unbless'd by Fortune and to Fame unknown;
A lowly shepherd-swain of Judah's tribe:
But greatness ever springs from low beginnings.
That very Nile thou mention'st, whose broad
stream

Bears fruitfulness and health through many a
clime,

From an unknown, penurious, scanty source
Took its first rise. The forest oak, which shades
The sultry troops in many a toilsome march
Once an unheeded acorn lay. O king!

Who ne'er begins can never aught achieve
Of glorious. Thou thyself wast once unknown,
Till fair occasion brought thy worth to light.
Far higher views inspire my youthful heart
Than human praise: I seek to vindicate
Th' insulted honour of the God I serve.

Abner. 'Tis nobly said.

Saul. I love thy spirit, youth!
But dare not trust thy inexperience'd arm
Against a giant's might. The sight of blood,
Though brave thou feel'st when peril is not nigh,
Will pale thy ardent cheek.

David. Not so, O king!
This youthful arm has been imbrued in blood
Though yet no blood of man has ever stain'd it.
Thy servant's occupation is a shepherd.
With jealous care I watch'd my father's flock:
A brindled lion and a furious bear
Forth from the thicket rush'd upon the fold,
Seiz'd a young lamb, and tore their bleating
spoil.

Urg'd by compassion for my helpless charge,
I felt a new-born vigour nerve my arm;
And, eager, on the foaming monsters rush'd.
The famish'd lion by his grisly beard,
Enrag'd, I caught, and smote him to the ground.
The panting monster struggling in my gripe,
Shook terribly his bristling mane, and lash'd
His own gaunt, gory sides; fiercely he ground
His gnashing teeth, and rolled his starting eyes,
Bloodshot with agony; then with a groan,
That wak'd the echoes of the mountain, died.
Nor did his grim associate 'scape my arm;
Thy servant slew the lion and the bear;
I kill'd them both, and bore their shaggy spoils
In triumph home: and shall I fear to meet
Th' uncircumcised Philistine? No: that God
Who sav'd me from the bear's destructive fang
And hungry lion's jaw, will not he save me
From this idolater?

Saul. He will, he will!
Go, noble youth! be valiant and be bless'd!
The God thou serv'st will shield thee in the
fight,
And nerve thy arm with more than mortal
strength.

Abner. So the bold Nazarite* a lion slew:
An earnest of his victories o'er Philistia!
Saul. Go, Abner; see the youth be well
equipp'd

With shield and spear. Be it thy care to grace
him

With all the fit accoutrements of war.

The choicest mail from my rich armory take,
And gird upon his thigh my own try'd sword
Of noblest temper'd steel.

Abner.

I shall obey.

David. Pardon, O king! the coat of plaited
mail

These limbs have never known; it would not
shield,

'Twould but encumber one who never felt
The weight of armour.

Saul.

Take thy wish, my son!

Thy sword then, and the God of Jacob guard
thee!

PART IV.

Scene—Another part of the camp.

DAVID (kneeling.)

ETERNAL Justice! in whose awful scale
Th' event of battle hangs! Eternal Truth!
Whose beams illumines all! Eternal Mercy!
If, by thy attributes I may, unblam'd,
Address thee; Lord of glory! hear me now:
O teach these hands to war, these arms to fight.
Thou ever present help in time of need!
Let thy broad mercy, as a shield, defend,
And let thine everlasting arms support me!
Strong in thy strength, in thy protection safe
Then, though the heathen rage, I shall not fear.
Jehovah, be my buckler! Mighty Lord!
Thou who hast deign'd by humble instruments
To manifest the wonders of thy might,
Be present with me now! 'Tis thine own cause!
Thy wisdom sees events, thy goodness plans
Schemes baffling our conception—and, 'tis still
Omnipotence which executes the deed
Of high design, though by a feeble arm!
I feel a secret impulse drive me on;
And my soul springs impatient for the fight!
'Tis not the heated spirits, or warm blood
Of sanguine youth with which my bosom burns;
And, though I thirst to meet th' insulting foe,
And pant for glory, 'tis not, witness Heav'n!
'Tis not the sinful lust of fading fame,
The perishable praise of mortal man;
His praise I covet, whose applause is Life.

DAVID, ELIAB, ISRAELITES.

Eliab. What do I hear? thou truant! thou
hast dar'd
E'en to the awful presence of the king
Bear thy presumption!

David. He who fears the Lord
Shall boldly stand before the face of kings,
And shall not be asham'd.

Eliab. But what wild dream
Has urg'd thee to this deed of desperate rash-
ness?

Thou mean'st, so I have learn'd, to meet Goliath,
His single arm to thine.

* Samson. See Judges, chap. xiv.

David. 'Tis what I purpose,
Ev'n on this spot. Each moment I expect
His wish'd approach.

Eliab. Go home; return, for shame!
Nor madly draw destruction on thy head.
Thy doating father, when thy shepherd's coat,
Drench'd in thy blood, is brought him, will lament,

And rend his furrow'd cheek and silver hair,
As if some mighty loss had touch'd his age;
And mourn, ev'n as the partial patriarch
mourn'd

When Joseph's bloody garment he receiv'd
From his less dear, nor less deserving, sons:
But whence that glitt'ring ornament which
hangs

Useless upon thy thigh?

David. 'Tis the king's gift.
But thou art right; it suits not me, my brother!
Nor sword I mean to use, nor spear to poise,
Lest men should say I put my trust in arms,
Not in the Lord of Hosts.

Eliab. Then thou indeed
Art bent to seek thy death?

David. And what is death?
Is it so terrible to die, my brother?
Or grant it terrible, is it for that
The less inevitable? If, indeed
We could by stratagem elude the blow,
When some high duty calls us forth to die,
And thus for ever shun it, and escape
The universal lot,—then fond self-love,
'Then cautious Prudence, boldly might produce
Their fine-spun arguments, their learn'd harangues,

Their cobweb arts, their phrase sophistical,
Their subtle doubts, and all the specious trick
Of selfish cunning lab'ring for its end.
But since, howe'er protracted, death will come,
Why fondly study, with ingenious pains,
To put it off! To breathe a little longer
Is to defer our fate, but not to shun it.
Small gain! which Wisdom with indiff'rent eye
Beholds. Why wish to drink the bitter dregs
Of life's exhausted chalice, whose last runnings,
Ev'n at the best, are rapid! Why not die
(If Heav'n so will) in manhood's op'ning bloom,
When all the flush of life is gay about us!
When sprightly youth with many a new-born
joy,

Solicits every sense! So may we then
Present a sacrifice, unmeet indeed,
(Ah, how unmeet!) but less unworthy far,
Than the world's leavings; than a worn out
heart,

By vice enfeebled, and by vain desires
Sunk and exhausted!

Eliab. Hark! I hear a sound
Of multitudes approaching!

David. 'Tis the giant!

I see him not, but hear his measur'd pace.

Eliab. Look, where his pond'rous shield is
borne before him!

David. Like a broad moon its ample disk
portends.

But soft!—what unknown prodigy appears?
A moving mountain cas'd in polish'd brass!

Eliab (getting behind David) How's this?

Thou dost not tremble. Thy firm joints

Betray no fear; thy accents are not broken;

Thy cheek retains its red; thine eye its lustre,
He comes more near! Dost thou not fear him
now?

David. No,
The vast colossal statue nor inspires
Respect nor fear. Mere magnitude of form,
Without proportion'd intellect and valour,
Strikes not my soul with rev'rence or with awe.

Eliab. Near, and more near he comes! I hold
it rash

To stay so near him, and expose a life
Which may, hereafter serve the state.

Farewell.

[*Exit.*]

[*GOLIATH advances, clad in complete armour.
One bearing his shield precedes him. The
opposing armies are seen at a distance, drawn
up on each side of the valley. GOLIATH begins
to speak before he comes on. DAVID stands in
the same place, with an air of indifference.*]

Goliath. Where is this mighty man of war,
who dares

Accept the challenge of Philistia's chief?

What victor king, what gen'ral drench'd in
blood,

Claims this high privilege? What are his
rights?

What proud credentials does the boaster bring
To prove his claim? What cities laid in ashes?

What ruin'd provinces? What slaughter'd
realms?

What heads of heroes, and what hearts of kings,
In battle kill'd, or at his altars slain,

Has he to boast? Is his bright armory

Thick set with spears, and swords, and coats
of mail

Of vanquish'd nations, by his single arm
Subdu'd? Where is the mortal man so bold,

So much a wretch, so out of love with life,

To dare the weight of this uplifted spear,

Which never fell innoxious? Yet I swear,

I grudge the glory to this parting soul
To fall by this right hand. 'Twill sweeten
death,

To know he had the honour to contend

With the dread son of Anak. Latest time

From blank oblivion shall retrieve his name

Who dar'd to perish in unequal fight

With Gath's triumphant champion. Come, ad-
vance.

Philistia's gods to Israel's. Sound, my herald—
Sound for the battle straight.

[*Herald sounds the trumpet.*]

David. Behold thy foe!

Goliath. I see him not.

David. Behold him here!

Goliath. Say, where!

Direct my sight. I do not war with boys.

David. I stand prepar'd: thy single arm to
mine.

Goliath. Why this is mockery, minion! it
may chance

To cost thee dear. Sport not with things above
thee!

But tell me who of all this num'rous host
Expects his death from me? Which is the man

Whom Israel sends to meet my bold defiance?

David. Th' election of my sov'reign falls on
me.

Goliath. On thee ! on thee ! By Dagon, 'tis too much !

Thou curled minion ! thou a nation's champion !
'Twould move my mirth at any other time ;
But trilling 's out of tune, begone, light boy !
And tempt me not too far.

David. I do defy thee,
Thou foul idolator ! Hast thou not scorn'd
The armies of the living God I serve ?
By me he will avenge upon thy head
Thy nation's sins and thine. Arm'd with his
name,
Unshrinking, I dare meet the stoutest foe
That ever bath'd his hostile spear in blood.

Goliath. (ironically) Indeed ! 'tis wondrous well,

Now, by my gods,
The stripling plays the orator ! Vain boy !
Keep close to that same bloodless war of words,
And thou shalt still be safe. Tongue-valiant
warrior !

Where is thy sylvan crook, with garlands hung,
Of idle field flowers ? where thy wanton harp,
Thou dainty finger'd hero ? better strike
its notes lascivious, or the lulling lute
Touch softly, than provoke the trumpet's rage.
I will not stain the honour of my spear
With thy inglorious blood. Shall that fair cheek
Be scar'd with wounds unseemly ? Rather go
And hold fond dalliance with the Syrian maids ;
To wanton measures dance, and let them braid
The bright luxuriance of thy golden hair ;
They, for their lost Adonis, may mistake
Thy dainty form.

David. Peace, thou unhallow'd railer !
O tell it not in Gath, nor let the sound
Reach Askelon, how once your slaughter'd lords
By mighty Samson* found one common grave :
When his broad shoulder the firm-pillars heav'd,
And to its base the tott'ring fabric shook.

Goliath. Insulting boy ! perhaps thou hast not
heard
The infamy of that glorious day,
When your weak host at Eben-ezer† pitch'd
Their quick-abandon'd tent ? Then when your
ark,

Your talisman, your charm, your boasted pledge
Of safety and success, was tamely lost !
And yet not tamely, since by me 'twas won.
When with this good right arm I thinn'd your
ranks,

And bravely crush'd, beneath a single blow
The chosen guardians of this vaunted shrine,
Hophni† and Phineas. The fam'd ark itself
I bore to Ashdod.

David. I remember too,
Since thou provok'st th' unwelcome truth, how
all

Your blushing priests beheld their idol's shame ;
When prostrate Dagon fell before the ark,
And your frail god was shiver'd. Then Philistia,
Idolatrous Philistia, flew for succour
To Israel's help, and all her smitten nobles
Confess'd the Lord was God ; and the bless'd ark.
Gladly, with reverential awe restor'd.

Goliath. By Ashod's fane thou ly'st.

* Judges, c. xvi.

† Samuel, c. v.

‡ Commentators say, that Chaldee paraphrase makes
Goliath boast that he had killed Hophni and Phineas,
and taken the ark prisoner.

Now will I meet thee,

Thou insect warrior, since thou dar'st me thus !
Already I behold thy mangled limbs,
Dissever'd each from each, ere long to feed
The fierce blood-snufling vulture. Mark me
well.

Around my spear I'll twist thy shining locks,
And loss in air thy head all gash'd with wounds,
Thy lip yet quiv'ring with the dire convulsion
Of recent death !—Art thou not terrify'd ?

David. No :

True courage is not mov'd by breath of words :
While rash bravery of boiling blood,
Impetuous, knows no settled principle.
A fer'ish tide, it has its ebbs and flows,
As spirits raise or fall, as wine inflames,
Or circumstances change : but inborn Courage,
The gen'rous child of Fortitude and Faith,
Holds its firm empire in the constant soul ;
And like the steadfast pole-star, never once
From the same fix'd and faithful point declines.

Goliath. The curses of Philistia's gods be on
thee !

This fine-drawn speech is meant to lengthen out
That little life thy words pretend to scorn.

David. Ha ! say'st thou so ? Come on then.
Mark us well.

Thou com'st to me with sword, and spear, and
shield ;

In the dread name of Israel's God I come ;
The living Lord of Hosts, whom thou defy'st !
Yet though no shield I bring, no arms except
These five smooth stones I gather'd from the
brook,

With such a simple sling as shepherd's use—
Yet all expos'd defenceless as I am,

The God I serve shall give thee up a prey
To my victorious arm. This day I mean
To make the uncircumcis'd tribes confess
There is a God in Israel. I will give thee,
Spite of thy vaunted strength and giant bulk,
To glut the carrion kites. Nor thee alone ;
The mangled carcases of your thick hosts
Shall spread the plains of Elah, till Philistia,
Through all her trembling tents and flying
bands,

Shall own that Judah's God is God indeed !
—I dare thee to the trial.

Goliath. Follow me—

In this good spear I trust.

David. I trust in Heav'n !

The God of battle stimulates my arm,
And fires my soul with ardour not its own.

PART V.

Scene—The tent of Saul.

Saul (rising from his couch.) Oh ! that I knew
the black and midnight arts

Of wizard sorcery ! that I could call
The slumb'ring spirit from the shades of hell !
Or, like the Chaldean sages, could foreknow
Th' event of things unacted ! I might then
Anticipate my fortune. How I'm fall'n !
The sport of vain chimeras, the weak slave
Of fear and fancy ; coveting to know
The arts obscene, which foul diviners use.
Thick blood and moping Melancholy lead

To baleful Superstition—that fell fiend,
Whose with'ring charms blast the fair bloom of
Virtue.

Why did my wounded pride with scorn reject
The wholesome truths which holy Samuel told
me!

Why drive him from my presence? he might
now

Raise my sunk soul, and my benighted mind
Enlighten'd with religion's cheering ray.
He dar'd to menace me with loss of empire;
And I, for that bold honesty, dismiss'd him.
'Another shall possess thy throne,' he cry'd:
'A stranger!' This unwelcome prophecy
Has lined my crown and strew'd my couch with
thorns.

Each ray of op'ning merit I discern
In friend or foe, distracts my troubled soul,
Lest he should prove my rival. But this morn,
Ev'n my young champion lovely as he look'd
In blooming valour, struck me to the soul
With Jealousy's barb'd dart. O Jealousy!
Thou ugliest fiend of hell! thy deadly venom
Preys on my vitals, turns the healthful hue
Of my fresh cheek to haggard sallowness,
And drinks my spirit up.

[*A flourish of trumpets, shouting, &c.*

What sounds are those?

The combat is decided. Hark! again
Those shouts proclaim it! Now, O God of Jacob,
If yet thou hast not quite withdrawn from Saul
Thy light and favour, prosper me this once!
But Abner comes! I dread to hear his tale!
Fair hope, with smiling face but ling'ring foot,
Has long deceiv'd me.

Abner. King of Israel, hail!
Now thou art king indeed. The youth has con-
quer'd:
Goliath's dead.

Saul. Oh speak thy tale again,
Lest my fond ears deceive me!

Abner. Thy young champion
Has slain the giant.

Saul. Then God is gracious still,
In spite of my offences! But good Abner!
How was it? Tell me all. Where is my cham-
pion?

Quick let me press him to my grateful heart,
And pay him a king's thanks. And yet, who
knows,

This forward friend may prove an active foe!
No more of that. Tell me the whole, brave
Abner!

And paint the glorious acts of my young hero!
Abner. Full in the centre of the camp he
stood!

Th' opposing armies rang'd on either side
In proud array. The haughty giant stalk'd
Stately across the valley. Next the youth
With modest confidence advanc'd. Nor pomp,
Nor gay parade, nor martial ornament,
His graceful form adorn'd. Goliath strait,
With solemn state began the busy work
Of dreadful preparation. In one place
His closely jointed mail an op'ning left
For air, and only one: the watchful youth
Mark'd that the beaver of his helm was up.
Meanwhile the giant such a blow devis'd
As would have crush'd him. This the youth
perceiv'd,

And from his well-directed sling quick hurl'd,
With dex'trous aim a stone, which sunk, deep
lodg'd,

In the capacious forehead of the foe.

Then with a cry, as loud and terrible

As Lybian lions roaring for their young,

Quite stunn'd, the furious giant stagger'd, reel'd,

And fell: the mighty mass of man fell prone.

With its own weight his shatter'd bulk was
bruise'd.

His clattering arms rung dreadfully through the
field,

And the firm basis of the solid earth

Shook. Chok'd with blood and dust, he curs'd
his gods,

And died blaspheming! Straight the victor youth
Drew from his sheath the giant's pond'rous
sword,

And from the enormous trunk the gory head,
Furious in death, he sever'd. The grim visage
Look'd threat'ning still, and still frown'd hor-
ribly.

Saul. O glorious deed! O valiant conqueror!

Abner. The youth so calm appear'd, so nobly
firm,

So cool, yet so intrepid, that these eyes

Ne'er saw such temp'rate valour so chastis'd

By modesty.

Saul. Thou dwell'st upon his praise
With needless circumstance. 'Twas nobly done;
But others too have fought!

Abner. None, none so bravely.

Saul. What follow'd next?

Abner. The shouting Israelites
On the Philistians rush'd, and still pursue
Their routed remnants. In dismay, their bands,
Disorder'd fly, while shouts of loud acclaim
Pursue their brave deliverer. Lo, he comes!
Bearing the giant's head and shining sword,
His well-earn'd trophies.

SAUL, ABNER, DAVID.

[DAVID bearing GOLIATH's head and sword. *He
kneels and lays both at SAUL's feet.*

Saul. Welcome to my heart,
My glorious champion! My deliverer welcome!
How shall I speak the swelling gratitude
Of my full heart! or give thee the high praise
Thy gallant deeds deserve!

David. O mighty king!
Sweet is the breath of praise when given by
those

Whose own high merit claims the praise they
give.

But let not this one prosperous event,
By heav'n directed, be ascrib'd to me;
I might have fought with equal skill and con-
rage,

And not have gain'd this conquest; then had
shame

Harsh obloquy, and foul disgrace, befallen me:
But prosperous fortune gains the praise of valour

Saul. I like not this. In every thing superior.
He soars above me (*aside*).—Modest youth,
thou'rt right.

And fortune, as thou say'st, deserves the praise
We give to human valour.

David. Rather say
The God of Hosts deserves it.

Saul. Tell me youth,
What is thy name, and what thy father's house?
David. My name is David; Jesse is my sire:
An humble Bethle'mite of Judah's tribe.

Saul. David, the son of Jesse! Sure that name
Has been familiar to me. Nay thy voice
Thy form and features, I remember too,
Though faint and indistinctly.

Abner. In this hero
Behold thy sweet musician; he whose harp
Expell'd the melancholy fiend, whose pow'r
Enslav'd thy spirit.

Saul. This the modest youth,
Whom for his skill and virtues I preferr'd
To bear my armour?

David. I am he, O king!

Saul. Why this concealment? tell me valiant

David,
Why didst thou hide thy birth and name till
now?

David. O king! I would not aught from favour
claim,

Or on remember'd services presume;
But on the strength of my own actions stand
Ungrac'd and unsupported.

Abner. Well he merits
The honours which await him. Why, O king,
Dost thou delay to bless his doubting heart
With his well-earn'd rewards! Thy lovely
daughter,

By right of conquest his!

Saul. (to David.) True: thou hast won her.
She shall be thine. Yes, a king's word is past.

David. O boundless blessing! What shall she
be mine,

For whom contending monarchs might renounce
Their slighted crowns!

[*Sounds of musical instruments heard at a distance. Shouting and singing. A grand procession. Chorus of Hebrew women.*]

Saul. How's this! what sounds of joy

Salute my ears! What means this needless
pomp!

This merry sound of tabret and of harp!
What means these idle instruments of triumph?
These women, who in fair procession move,
Making sweet melody?

Abner. To pay due honour
To David are they come.

Saul. (aside.) A rival's praise
Is discord to my ear! They might have spar'd
This idle pageantry; it wounds my soul!

[*Martial symphony: after which, chorus of women sing.*]

I.

PREPARE! your festal rites prepare!

Let your triumphs rend the air!

Idol gods shall reign no more:

We the living Lord adore!

Let heathen hosts on human helps repose,
Since Israel's God has routed Israel's foes.

II.

Let remotest nations know

Proud Goliath's overthrow.

Fall'n Philistia, is thy trust,

Dagon mingles with the dust!

Who fears the Lord of Glory, need not fear
The brazen armour or the lifted spear.

III.

See, the routed squadron fly!

Hark the clamours rend the sky!

Blood and carnage stain the field!

See the vanquish'd nations yield!

Dismay and terror fill the frighten'd land,
While conqu'ring David routs the trembling band.

IV.

Lo! upon the tented field

Royal Saul has thousands kill'd!

Lo! upon th' ensanguin'd plain

David has ten thousand slain!

Let mighty Saul his vanquish'd thousands tell,
While tenfold triumphs David's victories swell.

BELSHAZZAR:

A SACRED DRAMA.

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, who didst weaken the nations!—*Isaiah.*

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

BELSHAZZAR, king of Babylon.

NITOCRIS, the queen mother.

Courtiers, Astrologers, Parasites.

DANIEL, the Jewish Prophet.

Captive Jews, &c. &c.

Scene—Babylon. Time—Night.

The subject is taken from the fifth chapter of the Prophet Daniel.

PART I.

Scene—Near the palace of Babylon.

DANIEL AND CAPTIVE JEWS.

Dan. PARENT of Life and Light! Sole Source
of Good!

Whose tender mercies through the tide of time,
In long successive order, have sustain'd,
And sav'd the sons of Israel! Thou whose power
Deliver'd righteous Noah from the flood,
The whelming flood, the grave of human kind!
Oh Thou, whose guardian care and outstretch'd
hand

Rescued young Isaac from the lifted arm,
 Rais'd, at thy bidding, to devote a son,
 An only son, doom'd by his sire to die:
 (O saving faith, by such obedience prov'd!
 O blest obedience, hallow'd thus by faith!
 Thou, who in mercy sav'dst the chosen race
 In the wild desert, and didst there sustain them
 By wonder-working love, though they rebell'd
 And murmur'd at the miracles that sav'd them!
 O hear thy servant Daniel! hear and help!
 Thou, whose almighty power did after raise
 Successive leaders to defend our race;
 Who sentest valiant Joshua to the field,
 The people's champion, to the conqu'ring field,
 Where the revolving planet of the night,
 Suspended in her radiant round, was stay'd;
 And the bright sun arrested in his course,
 Stupendously stood still!

CHORUS OF JEWS.

I.

WHAT ail'd thee, that thou stood'st still,
 O sun! nor did thy flaming orb decline!
 And thou, O moon! in Ajalon's low vale,
 Why didst thou long before thy period shine?

II.

Was it at Joshua's dread command,
 The leader of the Israelitish band?
 Yes—at a mortal bidding both stood still;
 'Twas Joshua's word, but 'twas Jehovah's will.

III.

What all-controlling hand had force
 To stop eternal Nature's constant course?
 The wand'ring moon to one fix'd spot confine,
 But His whose fiat gave them first to shine?

Dan. O Thou! who, when thy discontented
 host,
 Tir'd of Jehovah's rule, desir'd a king,
 In anger gav'st them Saul; and then again
 Did'st wrest the regal sceptre from his hand
 To give it David—David, best belov'd!
 Illustrious David! poet, prophet, king;
 Thou who did'st suffer Solomon the wise
 To build a glorious Temple to thy name,—
 O hear thy servants, and forgive us too!
 If by severe necessity compell'd,
 We worship here—we have no temple now:
 Altar or sanctuary none is left.

CHORUS OF JEWS.

O JUDAH! let thy captive sons deplore
 Thy far-fam'd temple's now no more!
 Fall'n is thy sacred fane, thy glory gone!
 Fall'n is thy temple, Solomon!
 Ne'er did Barbaric kings behold,
 With all their shining gems, their burnish'd gold,
 A fane so perfect, bright, and fair:
 For God himself was wont t' inhabit there.
 Between the cherubim his glory stood,
 While the high-priest alone the dazzling splen-
 dour view'd.
 How fondly did the Tyrian artist strive,
 His name to latest time should live!
 Such wealth the stranger wonder'd to behold:
 Gold were the tablets, and the vases gold.
 Of cedar such an ample store,
 Exhausted Lebanon could yield no more.
 Bending before the Ruler of the sky,
 Well might the royal founder cry,

Fill'd with an holy dread, a rev'rend fear,
 Will God in very deed inhabit here?
 The heaven of heavens beneath his feet,
 Is for the brig' inhabitant unmeet:
 Archangels prostrate wait his high com-
 mands,
 And will he deign to dwell in temples made
 with hands?

[preme

Dan. Yes, Thou art ever present, Pow'r Su-
 Not circumscrib'd by time, nor fix'd to space,
 Confin'd to altars, nor to temples bound.
 In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,
 In dungeons or on thrones, the faithful find thee!
 E'en in the burning caldron thou wast near
 To Shadrach and the holy brotherhood:
 The unhurt martyrs bless'd Thee in the flames,
 They sought, and found Thee; call'd, and Thou
 wast there.

First Jew. How chang'd our state! Judah,
 thy glory's fallen!

Thy joys for hard captivity exchang'd:
 And thy sad sons breathe the polluted air
 Of Babylon, where deities obscene
 Insult the living God; and to his servants,
 The priests of wretched idols made with hands,
 Show contumelious scorn.

Dan. 'Tis heaven's high will.

Second Jew. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem!
 If I not fondly cherish thy lov'd image,
 E'en in the giddy hour of thoughtless mirth;
 If I not rather view thy prostrate walls
 Than haughty Babylon's imperial tow'rs—
 Then may my tongue refuse to frame the strains
 Of sweetest harmony, my rude right hand
 Forget, with sounds symphonious, to accord
 The harp of Jesse's son to Zion's song.

First Jew. Oft on Euphrates' ever verdant
 banks

Where drooping willows form a mournful shade
 With all the pride which prosp'rous fortunes
 give,
 And all th' unfeeling mirth of happy men,
 Th' insulting Babylonians ask a song;
 Such songs as erst in better days were sung
 By Korah's sons, or heav'n-taught Asaph set
 To loftiest measures; then our bursting hearts
 Feel all their woes afresh; the galling chain
 Of bondage crushes then the free-born soul
 With wringing anguish from the trembling lip
 Th' unfinished cadence falls; and the big tear,
 While it relieves, betrays the wo-fraught soul.
 For who can view Euphrates' pleasant stream,
 Its drooping willows, and its verdant banks,
 And not to wounded memory recall
 The piny groves of fertile Palestine,
 The vales of Solyma, and Jordan's stream!

Dan. Firm faith and deep submission to high
 heaven

Will teach us to endure without a murmur
 What seems so hard. Think what the holy host
 Of patriarchs, saints, and prophets have sus-
 tain'd,

In the best cause of truth! And shall not we,
 O men of Judah! dare what these have dar'd?
 And boldly pass through the refining fire
 Of fierce affliction? Yes, be witness, Heaven!
 Old as I am, I will not shrink at death,
 Come in what shape it may, if God so will,
 By peril to confirm and prove my faith.

Oh! I would dare you den of hungry lions,
Rather than pause to fill the task assign'd
By wisdom Infinite. Nor think I boast,
Not in myself, but in thy strength I trust,
Spirit of God!

First Jew. Prophet, thy words support,
And raise our sinking souls.

Dan. Behold yon palace;
There proud Belshazzar keeps his wanton court!
I knew it once beneath another lord,
His grandsire,* who subdu'd Jehoiachin,
And hither brought sad Judah's captive tribes;
And with them brought the rich and precious
relics

Of our fam'd temple; all the holy treasure,
The golden vases, and the sacred cups,
Which grac'd, in happier times, the sanctuary.

Second Jew. May HE to whose blest use they
were devoted,

Preserve them from pollution; and once more,
In his own gracious time restore the temple!

Dan. I, with some favour'd youths of Jewish
race

Was lodg'd in the king's palace, and instructed
In all the various learning of the East;
But HE, on whose great name our fathers call'd,
Preserv'd us from the perils of a court,
Warn'd us to guard our youthful appetites,
And still with holy fortitude reject
The pamp'ring viands Luxury presented;
Fell Luxury; more perilous to youth
Than storms or quicksands, poverty or chains:

Second Jew. He who can guard 'gainst the
low baits of sense,

Will find Temptations arrows hurtless strike
Against the brazen shield of Temperance.
For 'tis th' inferior appetites enthral
The man, and quench th' immortal light within
him;

The senses take the soul an easy prey,
And sink th' imprison'd spirit into brute.

Dan. Twice,† by the Spirit of God, did I ex-
pound

The visions of the king; his soul was touch'd,
And twice did he repent, and prostrate fall
Before the God of Daniel: yet again,
Pw'r, flattery, and prosperity, undid him.
When from the lofty ramparts of his palace
He view'd the splendours of the royal city,
That magazine of wealth, which proud Euphra-
tes

Wafts from each distant corner of the earth;
When he beheld the adamantine tow'rs,
The brazen gates, the bulwarks of his strength,
The pendant gardens, Art's stupendous work,
The wonder of the world! the proud Chaldean,
Mad with th' intoxicating fumes which rise
When uncontroll'd ambition grasps at once
Dominion absolute, and boundless wealth,
Forgot he was a man, forgot his god!
'This mighty Babylon is mine,' he cry'd;
'My wondrous pow'r, my godlike arm achiev'd
it.

I scorn submission; own no Deity
Above my own.—While the blasphemer spoke,
The wrath of Heav'n inflicted instant ven-
geance;

Stripp'd him of that bright reason he abus'd;
And drove him from the cheerful haunts of men,
A naked, wretched, helpless, senseless thing;
Companion of the brutes, his equals now.

First Jew. Nor does his impious grandson,
proud Belshazzar,

Fall short of his offences; nay, he wants
The valiant spirit and the active soul
Of his progenitor; for Pleasure's slave,
Though bound in silken chains, and only tied
In flowery fetters, seeming light and loose,
Is more subdu'd than the rash casual victim
Of anger or ambition; these indeed
Burn with a fiercer but a short-lived fire;
While pleasure with a constant flame consumes,
War slays her thousands, but destructive Plea-
sure,

More fell, more fatal, her ten thousands slays:
The young luxurious king she fondly woos
In ev'ry shape of am'rous blandishment;
With adulation smooth ensnares his soul;
With love betrays him, and with wine inflames.
She strews her magic poppies o'er his couch,
And with delicious opiates charms him down,
In fatal slumbers bound. Though Babylon
Is now, invested by the warlike troops
Of royal Cyrus, Persia's valiant prince;
Who, in conjunction with the Median king;
Darius, fam'd for conquest, now prepares
To storm the city: not the impending horrors
Which ever wait a siege have pow'r to wake
To thought or sense th' intoxicated king.

Dan. E'en in this night of universal dread,
A mighty army threat'ning at the gates;
This very night, as if in scorn of danger,
The dissolute Belshazzar holds a feast
Magnificently impious, meant to honour
Belus, the fav'rite Babylonish idol.

Lew'd parasites compose his wanton court,
Whose impious flatt'ries sooth his monstrous
crimes:

They justify his vices and extol
His boastful phrase, as if he were some god:
Whate'er he says, they say; what he commands,
Implicitly they do; they echo back
His blasphemies with shouts of loud acclaim;
And when he wounds the tortur'd ear of Virtue,
They cry "All hail! Belshazzar live for ever!"
To-night a thousand nobles fill his hall,
Princes, and all the dames who grace the court;
All but his virtuous mother, sage Nitocris:
Ah! how unlike the impious king her son!
She never mingles in the midnight fray,
Nor crowns the guilty banquet with her pre-
sence.

The royal fair is rich in every virtue
Which can adorn the queen or grace the wo-
man.

But for the wisdom of her prudent counsels
This wretched empire had been long undone.
Not fam'd Semiramis, Assyria's pride,
Could boast a brighter mind or firmer soul;
Beneath the gentle reign of Merodach,*
Her royal lord, our nation tasted peace.
Our captive monarch, sad Jehoiachin,
Grown gray in a close prison's horrid gloom,
He freed from bondage; brought the hoary
king

* Nebuchadnezzar.

† Daniel, chap. ii. and iv.

* 2 Kings, chap. xxiv.

To taste once more the long-forgotten sweets
Of liberty and light, sustain'd his age,
Pour'd in his wounds the lenient balm of kindness,
And blest his setting hour of life with peace.

[*Sound of trumpets is heard at a distance.*]

First Jew. That sound proclaims the banquet is begun.

Second Jew. Hark! the licentious uproar grows more loud,

The vaulted roof resounds with shouts of mirth,
And the firm palace shakes! Retire my friends;
This madness is not meet for sober ears.

If any of our race were found so near,
'Twould but expose us to the rude attack
Of ribaldry obscene and impious jests
From these mad sons of Belial, more inflam'd
To deeds of riot by the wanton feast.

Dan. Here part we then! but when again to meet

Who knows, save heaven? Yet, O my friends! I feel

An impulse more than human stir my breast.
Wrapt in prophetic vision,* I behold
Things hid as yet from mortal sight. I see
The dart of vengeance tremble in the air,
Ere long to pierce the impious king. E'en now

The desolating angel stalks abroad,
And brandishes aloft the two-edg'd sword
Of retribution keen; he soon will strike,
And Babylon shall weep as Sion wept.
Pass but a little while, and you shall see
This queen of cities prostrate on the earth.
This haughty mistress of the kneeling world,
How shall she sit dishonour'd in the dust,
In tarnish'd pomp and solitary woe!
How shall she shroud her glories in the dark,
And in opprobrious silence hide her head!
Lament, O virgin daughter of Chaldea!
For thou shalt fall! imperial queen, shalt fall!
No more Sidonian robes shall grace thy limbs.

To purple garments sackcloth shall succeed,
And sordid dust and ashes shall supply
The od'rous nard and cassia. Thou, who said'st
I am, and there is none beside me: thou,
E'en thou, imperial Babylon, shalt fall!
Thy glory quite eclips'd! The pleasant sound
Of viol and of harp shall charm no more;
Nor song of Syrian damsels shall be heard,
Responsive to the lute's luxurious note:
But the loud bittern's cry, the raven's croak,
The bat's fell scream, the lonely owl's dull plaint,

And ev'ry hideous bird, with ominous shriek,
Shall scare affrighted Silence from thy walls:
While Desolation, snatching from the hand
Of Time the scythe of ruin, sits aloft,
Or stalks in dreadful majesty abroad.
I see th' exterminating fiend advance,
E'en now I see her glare with horrid joy,
See tower's imperial mould'ring at her touch;
She glances on the broken battlement,
She eyes the crumbling column, and enjoys
The work of ages prostrate in the dust—
Then, pointing to the mischiefs she has made,
Exulting cries, This once was Babylon!

PART II.

Scene—the court of Belshazzar. The king seated on a magnificent throne. Princes, nobles, and attendants. Ladies of the court. Music—A superb banquet.

1st cour. (*rises and kneels.*) HAIL mighty king!

2d cour. Belshazzar, live for ever!

3d cour. Sun of the world, and light of kings, all hail!

4th cour. With lowly reverence, such as best becomes

The humblest creatures of imperial power,
Behold a thousand nobles bend before thee!
Princes far fam'd, and dames of high descent:
Yet all this pride of wealth, this boast of beauty,
Shrinks into nought before thine awful eye!
And lives or dies as the king frowns or smiles!

Bel. This is such homage as becomes your loves.

And suits the mighty monarch of mankind.

5th cour. The bending world should prostrate thus before thee;

And pay not only praise but adoration!

Belshazzar (*rises and comes forward.*)

Let dull Philosophy preach self-denial;

Let envious Poverty and snarling Age

Proudly declaim against the joys they know not.

Let the deluded Jews, who fondly hope
Some fancied heaven hereafter, mortify,
And lose the actual blessings of this world
To purchase others which may never come.
Our gods may promise less, but give us more
Ill could my ardent spirit be content
With meagre abstinence and hungry hope.
Let those misjudging Israelites, who want
The nimble spirits and the active soul,
Call their blunt feelings virtue: let them drudge,
In regular progression, through the round
Of formal duty and of daily toil;
And when they want the genius to be happy,
Believe their harsh austerity is goodness.
If there be gods, they meant we should enjoy:
Why give us else these tastes and appetites?
And why the means to crown them with indulgence?

To burst the feeble bonds which hold the vulgar,
Is noble daring.

1st cour. And is therefore worthy
The high imperial spirit of Belshazzar.

2d cour. Behold a banquet which the gods might share!

Bel. To-night, my friends, your monarch shall be blest

With ev'ry various joy; to-night is ours;
Nor shall the envious gods, who view our bliss,
And sicken as they view, to-night disturb us.
Bring all the richest spices of the East;
The od'rous cassia and the dropping myrrh,
The liquid amber and the fragrant gums,
Rob Gilead of its balms, Belshazzar bids,
And leave the Arabian groves without an odour.
Bring freshest flow'rs, exhaust the blooming spring,

Twine the green myrtle with the short-liv'd rose;

And ever, as the blushing garland fades,
We'll learn to snatch the fugitive delight.

* See the Prophecies of Isaiah, chap. xlvii. and others.

And grasp the flying joy ere it escapes us.
Come—fill the smiling goblet for the king;
Belshazzar will not let a moment pass
Unmark'd by some enjoyment! The full bowl
Let every guest partake!

[*Courtiers kneel and drink.*]

1st cour. Here's to the king!
Light of the world, and glory of the earth,
Whose words is fate!

Bel. Yes; we are likest gods
When we have pow'r, and use it. What is
wealth

But the rich means to gratify desire?
I will not have a wish, a hope, a thought,
That shall not know fruition. What is empire?
The privilege to punish and enjoy:
'To feel our pow'r in making others fear it;
'To taste of Pleasure's cup till we grow giddy,
And think ourselves immortal! This is empire!
My ancestors scarce tasted of its joys:
Shut from the sprightly world, and all its
charms,

In cumbrous majesty, in sullen state
And dull unsocial dignity they liv'd;
Far from the sight of an admiring world,
That world, whose gaze makes half the charms
of greatness;

They nothing knew of empire but the name,
Or saw it in the looks of trembling slaves;
And all they felt of royalty was care.
But I will see, and know it of myself;
Youth, Wealth, and Greatness court me to be
blest,

And Pow'r and Pleasure draw with equal force
And sweet attraction: both I will embrace
In quick succession; this is Pleasure's day;
Ambition will have time to reign hereafter;
It is the proper appetite of age.

The lust of pow'r shall lord it uncontroll'd,
When all the gen'rous feelings grow obtuse,
And stern Dominion holds, with rigid hand,
His iron rein, and sits and sways alone.
But youth is Pleasure's hour!

1st cour. Perish the slave
Who, with official counsel would oppose
The king's desire, whose slightest wish is law!

Bel. Now strike the loud-ton'd lyre and softer
lute;

Let me have music, with the nobler aid
Of poesy. Where are those cunning men
Who boast, by chosen sounds, and measur'd
sweetness;

To set the busy spirits in a flame,
And cool them at their will? who know the art
To call the hidden powers of numbers forth,
And make that pliant instrument, the mind,
Yield to the pow'rful sympathy of sound,
Obedient to the master's artful hand,
Such magic is song! Then give me song;
Yet not at first such soul dissolving strains
As melt the soften'd sense; but such bold mea-
sures

As may inflame my spirit to despise
Th' ambitious Persian, that presumptuous boy,
Who rashly dares e'en now invest our city,
And menaces th' invincible Belshazzar.

[*A grand concert of music, after which an ode.*]

In vain shall Persian Cyrus dare
With great Belshazzar wage unequal war:
In vain Darius shall combine,

Darius leader of the Median line;
While fair Euphrates' stream our walls protects,
And great Belshazzar's self our fate directs.

War and famine threat in vain,
While this demi-god shall reign!
Let Persia's prostrate king confess his pow'r,
And Media's monarch dread his vengeful hour.

On Dura's* ample plain behold
Immortal Belus,† whom the nations own;
Sublime he stands in burnish'd gold,
And richest offerings his bright altars crown.

To-night his deity we here adore,
And due libations speak his mighty pow'r.

Yet Belus' self not more we own
Than great Belshazzar on Chaldaea's throne.

Great Belshazzar like a God,
Rules the nations with a nod!

To great Belshazzar be the goblet crown'd!
Belshazzar's name the echoing roofs rebound!

Belsh. Enough! the kindling rapture fires my
brain,

And my heart dances to the flattering sounds,
I feel myself a god! Why not a god!
What were the deities our fathers worship'd?
What was great Nimrod our imperial founder?
What greater Belus, to whose pow'r divine
We raise to-night the banquet and the song
But youthful heroes, mortal, like myself,
Who by their daring earn'd divinity?
They were but men: nay some were less than
men,

Though now never'd as gods. What was Anubis,
Whom Egypt's sapient sons adore? A dog!
And shall not I, young, valiant, and a king,
Dare more? do more? exceed the boldest flights
Of my progenitors?—Fill me more wine,
To cherish and exalt the young idea. (*he drinks*)
Ne'er did Olympian Jupiter himself
Quaff such immortal draughts.

1st cour. What could that Canaan,
That heaven in hope, that nothing in possession,
That air-built bliss of the deluded Jews,
That promis'd land of milk and flowing honey,
What could that fancy'd Paradise bestow
To match these generous juices?

Belsh. Hold—enough!
Thou hast rous'd a thought. By Heav'n I will
enjoy it:

A glorious thought! which will exalt to rapture
The pleasure of the banquet, and bestow
A yet untasted relish of delight.

1st cour. What means the king?

Belsh. The Jews! said'st thou the Jews!

1st cour. I spoke of that undone, that outcast
people,

Those tributary creatures of thy pow'r,
The captives of thy will, whose very breath
Hangs on the sovereign pleasure of the king.

Belsh. When that abandoned race was hither
brought,

* Daniel, chap. iii.

† See a very fine description of the temple of this idol.

The tow'ring fane

Of Bel, Chaldean Jove, surpassing far
That Doric temple, which the Elean chiefs
Rais'd to their thunder from the spoils of war,
Or that Ionic, where th' Ephesian bow'd
To Dian, queen of heaven. Eight towers arise,
Each above each, immeasurable height,
A monument at once of eastern pride,
And slavish superstition, &c.

Were not the choicest treasures of their temple,
(Devoted to their God, and held most precious)
Among the spoils which grac'd Nebassar's*
triumphs,

And lodg'd in Babylon?

1st cour. O king! they were.

2d cour. The Jews, with superstitious awe,
behold

These sacred symbols of their ancient faith :
Nor has captivity abated aught
The rev'rend love they bear these holy reliques.
Though we deride their law, and scorn their
persons,
Yet never have we yet to human use
Devoted these rich vessels set apart
To sacred purposes.

Belsh. I joy to hear it!

Go—fetch them hither. They shall grace our
banquet.

Does no one stir? Belshazzar disobey'd?
And yet you live? Whence comes this strange
reluctance?

This new-born rev'rence for the helpless Jews?
This fear to injure those who can't revenge it?
Send to the sacred treasury in haste,
Let all be hither brought;—who answers dies.

[*They go out.*]

The mantling wine a higher joy will yield,
Pour'd from the precious flaggons which adorn'd
Their far-fam'd temple, now in ashes laid.
Oh! 'twill exalt the pleasure into transport,
To gall those whining, praying Israelites!

I laugh to think what wild dismay will seize
them

When they shall learn the use that has been
made

Of all their holy trumpery!

[*The vessels are brought in.*]

2d cour. It comes;

A goodly show! how bright with gold and gems!
Far fitter for a youthful monarch's board
Than the cold shrine of an unheeding God.

Belsh. Fill me that massy goblet to the brim.
Now, Abraham! let thy wretched race expect
The fable of their faith to be fulfil'd;
Their second temple and their promis'd king!
Now will they see the god they vainly serve
Is impotent to help; for had he pow'r
To hear and grant their pray'r, he would pre-
vent

This profanation.

[*As the king is going to drink, thunder is heard :
he starts from the throne, spies a hand, which
writes on the wall these words, MENE, MENE,
TEKEL, UPHARSIN. He lets fall the goblet, and
stands in an attitude of speechless horror. All
start and seem terrified.*]

1st cour. (after a long pause. Oh, transcend-
ant horror!

2d cour. What may this mean? The king is
greatly mov'd!

3d cour. Nor is it strange—who unappall'd
can view it?

Those sacred cups! I doubt we've gone too far!

1st cour. Observe the fear-struck king! his
starting eyes

* The name of Nebuchadnezzar not being reducible to
verse, I have adopted that of Nebassar, on the authority
of the ingenious and learned Author of 'Judah Re-
stored.'

Roll horribly. Thrice he essay'd to speak,
And thrice his tongue refus'd.

Belsh. (in a low trembling voice.) Ye mystic
words!

Thou semblance of an hand! illusive forms!

Ye wild fantastic images, what are ye?

Dread shadows, speak! Explain your dark in-
tent!

Ye will not answer me—Alas! I feel

I am a mortal now—My failing limbs

Refuse to bear me up. I am no god!

Gods do not tremble thus—Support me, hold me:

These loosen'd joints, these knees which smite
each other,

Betray I'm but a man—a weak one too!

1st cour. In truth, 'tis passing strange, and
full of horror!

Belsh. Send for the learn'd magicians, every
sage

Who deals in wizard spells and magic charms.

[*Some go out.*]

1st cour. How fares my lord the king?

Belsh. Am I a king?

What pow'r have I? Ye lying slaves, I am not.

Oh, soul distracting sight! but is it real?

Perhaps 'tis fancy all, or the wild dream

Of mad distemperature, the fumes of wine!

I'll look on it no more!—So—now I'm well!

I am a king again, and know not fear.

And yet my eyes will seek that fatal spot,

And fondly dwell upon the sight that blast
them!

Again, 'tis there! it is not fancy's work,

I see it still! 'tis written on the wall!

I see the writing, but the viewless writer,

Who! what is he! Oh, horror! horror! horror!

It cannot be the God of these poor Jews;

For what is He, that he can thus afflict?

2d cour. Let not my Lord the king be thus
dismay'd.

3d cour. Let not a phantom, an illusive shade
Disturb the peace of him who rules the world.

Belsh. No more, ye wretched sycophants!
no more!

The sweetest note which flatt'ry now can strike,
Harsh and discordant grates upon my soul.

Talk not of pow'r to one so full of fear,

So weak, so impotent! Look on that wall;

If thou wouldst soothe my soul explain the
writing,

And thou shalt be my oracle, my God!

O tell me whence it came, and what it means,

And I'll believe I am again a king!

Friends! princes! ease my troubled breast, and
say

What do the mystic characters portend?

1st cour. 'Tis not in us, O king, to ease thy
spirit;

We are not skill'd in those mysterious arts

Which wait the midnight studies of the sage:

But of the deep diviners thou shalt learn,

The wise astrologers, the sage magicians,

Who, of events unborn, take secret note,

And hold deep commerce with the unseen world.

Enter astologers, magicians, &c. &c.

Belsh. Approach, ye sages, 'tis the king com-
mands. [*They kneel.*]

Astrologers. Hail, mighty king of Babylon!

Belsh. Nay, rise:

I do not need your homage, but your help ;
The world may worship, you must counsel me.
He who declares the secret of the king,
No common honours shall await his skill ;
Our empire shall be tax'd for his reward,
And he himself shall name the gift he wishes.
A splendid scarlet robe shall grace his limbs,
His neck a princely chain of gold adorn :
Meet honours for such wisdom : He shall rule
The third in rank throughout our Babylon.

2d Astr. Such recompence becomes Belshazzar's bounty ;

Let the king speak the secret of his soul ;
Which heard, his humble creatures shall unfold.

Belsh. (points to the wall.) Be 't so—look there—
—behold these characters !

Nay, do not start, for I will know their meaning !
Ha ! answer ; speak, or instant death awaits you !
What, dumb ! all dumb ! where is your boasted skill ?

[They confer together.]

Keep them asunder—no confederacy—
No secret plots to make your tales agree,
Speak, slaves, and dare to let me know the worst !

[They kneel.]

1st Astr. O, let the king forgive his faithful servants !

2d Astr. O mitigate our threatened doom of death ;

If we declare, with mingled grief and shame,
We cannot tell the secret of the king,
Nor what these mystic characters portend !

Belsh. Off with their heads ! Ye shall not live an hour !

Curse on your shallow arts, your lying science !
'Tis thus you practice on the credulous world,
Who think you wise because themselves are weak !

But miscreants, ye shall die ! the pow'r to punish

Is all that I have left me of a king.

1st cour. Great sire, suspend their punishment a while ;

Behold Nitocris comes, thy royal mother !

Enter QUEEN.

Queen. O my misguided son !

Well may'st thou wonder to behold me here :
For I have ever shunn'd this scene of riot,
Where wild intemperance and dishonour'd mirth

Held festival impure. Yet, O Belshazzar !
I could not hear the wonders which befel,
And leave thee to the workings of despair :
For, spite of all the anguish of my soul
At thy offences, I'm thy mother still !
Against the solemn purpose I had form'd
Never to mix in this unhallow'd crowd,
The wondrous story of the mystic writing,
Of strange and awful import, brings me here ;
If haply I may show some likely means
To fathom this dark mystery.

Bel. Speak, O queen !

My list'ning soul shall hang upon thy words,
And prompt obedience follow them !

Queen. Then hear me.

Among thy captive tribes which hither came
To grace Nebassar's triumph, there was brought
A youth nam'd Daniel, favour'd by high Heav'n
With pow'r to look into the secret page
Of dim Futurity's mysterious volume.

The spirit of the holy gods is in him ;
No vision so obscure, so deeply hid,
No sentence so perplex'd but he can solve it ;
He can unfold the dark decrees of fate,
Can trace each crooked labyrinth of thought,
Each winding maze of doubt, and make it clear
And palpable to sense. He twice explain'd
The monarch's mystic dreams. The holy seer
Saw, with prophetic spirit, what befel
The king long after. For his wond'rous skill
He was rewarded, honour'd, and caress'd,
And with the rulers of Chaldea rank'd :
Though now, alas ! thrown by, his services
Forgotten or neglected.

Bel. Send with speed

A message to command the holy man
'To meet us on the instant.

Nitocris. I already

Have sent to ask his presence at the palace,
And lo ! in happy season see he comes.

Enter Daniel.

Bel. Welcome, thrice venerable sage ! approach.

Art thou that Daniel whom my great forefather
Brought hither with the captive tribes of Judah ?

Daniel. I am, O king !

Bel. Then, pardon, holy prophet ;
Nor let a just resentment of thy wrongs,
And long neglected merit, shut thy heart
Against a king's request, a suppliant king !

Daniel. The God I worship teaches to forgive.

Bel. Then let thy words bring comfort to my soul.

I've heard the spirit of the gods is in thee ;
That thou can'st look into the fates of men,
With prescience more than human !

Daniel. Hold, O king !

Wisdom is from above ; 'tis God's own gift,
I of myself am nothing ; but from Him
The little knowledge I possess, I hold :
To him be all the glory !

Bel. Then, O Daniel !

If thou indeed dost boast that wond'rous gift,
That faculty divine ; look there, and tell me !
O say, what mean those mystic characters ?
Remove this load of terror from my soul,
And honours, such as kings can give, await thee.

Thou shalt he great beyond thy soul's ambition,
And rich above thy wildest dream of wealth :
Clad in the scarlet robe our nobles wear,
And grac'd with princely ensigns thou shalt stand

Near our own throne, and third within our empire.

Daniel. O mighty king, thy gifts with thee remain

And let thy high rewards on others fall.
The princely ensign, nor the scarlet robe,
Nor yet to be the third within thy realm,
Can touch the soul of Daniel. Honour, fame,
All that the world calls great, thy crown itself,
Could never satisfy the vast ambition
Of an immortal spirit ; I aspire
Beyond thy pow'r of giving ; my high hopes
Reach also to a crown—but 'tis a crown
Unfading and eternal.

1st cour.

Wond'rous man !

Our priests teach no such notions.

Daniel. Yet, O king!
Though all unmov'd by grandeur or by gift,
I will unfold the high decree of Heaven,
And straight declare the mystery.

Bel. Speak, O prophet!

Daniel. Prepare to hear what kings have seldom heard;

Prepare to hear what courtiers seldom tell,
Prepare to hear the Truth. The mighty God,
Who rules the sceptres and the hearts of kings,
Gave thy renown'd forefather* here to reign,
With such extent of empire, weight of pow'r,
And greatness of dominion, the wide earth
Trembled beneath the terror of his name,
And kingdoms stood or fell as he decreed.
Oh! dangerous pinnacle of pow'r supreme!
Who can stand safe upon its treach'rous top,
Behold the gazing prostrate world below,
Whom depth and distance into pigmies shrink,
And not grow giddy! Babylon's great king
Forgot he was a man, a helpless man,
Subject to pain, and sin, and death, like others!
But who shall fight against Omnipotence?
Or who hath harden'd his obdurate heart
Against the Majesty of Heav'n, and prosper'd?
The God he hath insulted was aveng'd;
From empire, from the joys of social life,
He drove him forth; extinguish'd reason's lamp;
Quench'd that bright spark of deity within;
Compell'd him with the forest brutes to roam
For scanty pasture; and the mountain dews
Fell, cold and wet, on his defenceless head,
Till he confess'd,—Let men, let monarchs hear!
Till he confess'd, PRIDE WAS NOT MADE FOR MAN.

Nicotris. O awful instance of divine displeasure!

Bel. Proceed! my soul is wrapt in fix'd attention!

Daniel. O king! thy grandsire not in vain had sinn'd,

If, from his error thou hadst learnt the truth.
The story of his fall thou oft has heard,
But has it taught thee wisdom? Thou like him,
Hast been elate with pow'r, and mad with pride,
Like him, thou hast defy'd the living God.
Nay, to bold thoughts hast added deeds more bold.

Thou hast outwrought the pattern he bequeath'd thee,

And quite outgone example; hast profan'd
With impious hand, the vessels of the temple:
Those vessels sanctify'd to holiest use,
Thou hast polluted with unhallow'd lips,
And made the instruments of foul debauch,
Thou hast ador'd the gods of wood and stone,
Vile, senseless deities, the work of hands:
But HE, THE KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,
In whom exists thy life, thy soul, thy breath,
On whom thy being hangs, thou hast deny'd.

1st cour. (aside to the others.) With what an holy boldness he reproves him!

2d cour. Such is the fearless confidence of virtue!

And such the righteous courage those maintain
Who plead the cause of truth. The smallest word

He utters had been death to half the court.

* Nebuchadnezzar.

Bel. Now let the mystic writing be explain'd,
Thrice venerable sage!

Daniel. O mighty king!
Hear then its awful import: *Heav'n has number'd*

Thy days of royalty, and soon will end them.
Our God has weigh'd thee in the even balance
Of his own holy law, and finds thee wanting:
And last thy kingdom shall be wrested from thee.
And know, the *Mede and Persian shall possess it.*

Bel. (starts up.) Prophet, when shall this be?

Daniel. In God's own time;
Here my commission ends; I may not utter
More than thou'st heard; but oh! remember king!

Thy days are number'd: hear, repent and live!

Bel. Say, prophet, what can penitence avail?
If Heaven's decrees immutably are fix'd,
Can pray'rs avert our fate?

Daniel. They change our hearts,
And thus dispose Omnipotence to mercy.
'Tis man that alters; God is still the same.
Conditional are all Heav'n's covenants:
And when th' uplifted thunder is withheld,
'Tis pray'r that deprecates th' impending bolt.
Good Hezekiah's* days were number'd too;
But penitence and faith were mighty pleas:
At Mercy's throne they never plead in vain.

[*He is going.*]

Bel. Stay, prophet, and receive thy promis'd gift;

The scarlet robe and princely chain are thine:
And let my herald publish through the land
That Daniel stands, in dignity and pow'r,
The third in Babylon. These just rewards
Thou well may'st claim, though sad thy prophesy!

Queen. Be not deceiv'd my son! nor let thy soul

Snatch an uncertain moment's treach'rous rest,
On the dread brink of that tremendous gulf
Which yawns beneath thee.

Daniel. O unhappy king,
Know what *must* happen once *may* happen soon.
Remember that 'tis terrible to meet
Great evils unprepar'd: and, O Belshazzar!
In the wild moment of dismay and death,
Remember thou wast warn'd! and, O remember,
Warnings despis'd are condemnations then.

[*Exeunt Daniel and Queen.*]

Bel. 'Tis well—my soul shakes off its load of care:

'Tis only the obscure is terrible.
Imagination frames events unknown,
In wild fantastic shapes of hideous ruin,
And what it fears creates!—I know the worst;
And awful is that worst as fear could feign:
But distant are the ills I have to dread!
What is remote may be uncertain too!—
Ha! princes! hope breaks in!—This may not be.

1st cour. Perhaps this Daniel is in league with Persia;
And brib'd by Cyrus to report these horrors,
To weaken and impede the mighty plans
Of thy imperial mind.

Bel. 'Tis very like.

2d cour. Return we to the banquet.

Bel. Dare we venture?

* 2 Chron. chap. xxxiii. Isaiah, chap xxxviii.

3d. *cour.* Let not this dreaming seer disturb the king.

Against the pow'r of Cyrus and the Mede
Is Babylon secure. Her brazen gates
Mock all attempts to force them. Proud Euphrates,

A wat'ry bulwark, guards our ample city
From all assailants. And within the walls
Of this stupendous capital are lodg'd
Such vast provisions, such exhaustless stores,
As a twice ten years siege could never waste.

Bel. (*embraces him.*) My better genius! Safe in such resources,

I mock the prophet.—Turn me to the banquet!

[*As they are going to resume their places at the banquet, a dreadful uproar is heard, tumultuous cries, and warlike sounds. All stand terrified. Enter soldiers with their swords drawn and wounded.*]

Soldier. Oh, helpless Babylon! Oh, wretched king!

Chaldea is no more, the Mede has conquer'd!
The victor Cyrus, like a mighty torrent
Comes rushing on, and marks his way with ruin!
Destruction is at hand; escape or perish.

Bel. Impossible! Villain and slave thou ly'st!
Euphrates and the brazen gates secure us.
While those remain, Belshazzar laughs at danger.

Soldier. Euphrates is diverted from its course;
The brazen gates are burst, the city's taken;
Thyself a pris'ner, and thy empire lost.

Bel. Oh, prophet! I remember thee indeed!

[*He runs out. They follow in the utmost confusion.*]

Enter several Jews, Medes, and Babylonians.

1st Jew. He comes, he comes! the long predicted prince,
Cyrus, the destin'd instrument of Heaven,
To free our captive nation, and restore
Jehovah's temple. Carnage marks his way,
And Conquest sits upon his plume crown'd helm.

2d Jew. What noise is that?

1st Jew. Hark! 'tis Belshazzar's voice!

Bel. (*without.*) O soldier, spare my life, and aid my flight!

Such treasures shall reward the gentle deed
As Persia never saw. I'll be thy slave;
I'll yield my crown to Cyrus; I'll adore
His gods and thine—I'll kneel and kiss thy feet,
And worship thee.—It is not much I ask—
I'll live in bondage, beggary and pain,
So thou but let me live.

Soldier. Die, tyrant, die!

Bel. O Daniel! Daniel! Daniel!

Enter Soldier.

Soldier. Belshazzar's dead!
The wretched king breath'd out his furious soul
In that tremendous groan.

1st Jew. Belshazzar's dead!
Then, Judah, art thou free! The tyrant's fallen!
Jerusalem, Jerusalem is free!

PART III.

Enter DANIEL and Jews.

Dan. Bel boweth down,* and haughty Nebo stoops!

The idols fall; the god and worshipper
Together fall! together they bow down!
Each other, or themselves they cannot save.
O, Babylon, where is thy refuge now?
Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, meant to save,
Pervert thee; and thy blessing is thy bane!
Where are thy brutish deities, Chaldea?
Where are thy gods of gold?—Oh, Lord of life!
Thou very God! so fall thy foes before thee!

1st Jew. So fell beneath the terrors of Thy name

The idol Chemosh, Moab's empty trust;
So Ammonitish Moloch sunk before Thee;
So fell Philistine Dagon: so shall fall,
To time's remotest period, all thy foes,
Triumphant Lord of Hosts!

Daniel. How chang'd our fate!

Not for myself, O Judah! but for thee
I shed these tears of joy. For I no more
Must view the cedars which adorn the brow
Of Syrian Lebanon; no more shall see
Thy pleasant stream, O Jordan! nor the flocks
Which whiten all the mountains of Judea;
No more these eyes delighted shall review
Or Carmel's heights, or Sharon's flow'ry vales.
I must remain in Babylon! So Heav'n,
To whose awards I bow me, has decreed.
I ne'er shall see thee, Salem! I am old;
And few and toilsome are my days to come.
But we shall meet in those celestial climes,
Compar'd with which created glories sink;
Where sinners shall have pow'r to harm no more,

And martyr'd Virtue rests her weary head.
Though ere my day of promis'd grace shall come,

I shall be tried by perils strange and new;
Nor shall I taste of death, so have I learn'd,
Till I have seen the captive tribes restor'd.

1st Jew. And shall we view, once more, thy hallow'd towers,
Imperial Salem?

Dan. Yes, my youthful friends!
You shall behold the second temple rise,†
With grateful ecstasy; but we, your sires,
Now bent with hoary age; we, whose charm'd eyes
Beheld the matchless glories of the first,
Should weep, rememb'ring that we once had seen

That model of perfection!

2d Jew. Never more
Shall such a wond'rous structure grace the earth!

Dan. Well have you borne affliction, men of Judah!

Well have sustain'd your portion of distress:
And, unrepining, drank the bitter drops
Of adverse fortune! Happier days await you.
O guard against the perils of success!
Prosperity dissolves the yielding soul,
And the bright sun of shining fortune melts
The firmest virtue down. Beware my friends,
Be greatly cautious of prosperity!
Defend your sliding hearts; and, trembling, think

How those, who buffetted Affliction's waves

* Isaiah, chap. xlv. † Ezra, chap. i.

With vig'rous virtue, sunk in Pleasure's calm.
 He,* who of special grace had been allow'd
 To rear the hallow'd fane to Israel's God,
 By wealth corrupted, and by ease debauch'd,
 Forsook the God to whom he rais'd the fane;
 And, sunk in sensual sloth, consum'd his days
 In vile idolatrous rites,—Nor think, my sons,
 That virtue in sequester'd solitude
 Is always found. Within the inmost soul
 The hidden tempter lurks; nor less betrays
 In the still seeming safety of retreat,
 Than where the world her snares entangling
 spreads,
 More visible to sense. Guard every thought:
 Who thinks himself secure is half undone;
 For Sin, unwatch'd, may reach the sanctuary:
 'Tis not the place preserves us. Righteous Lot

* Solomon.

Stem'd the strong current of Corruption's tide,
 E'en in polluted Sodom; safe he liv'd,
 While circumspective Virtue's watchful eye
 Was anxiously awake: but in the shade,
 Far from the obvious perils which alarm
 With palpable temptation, secret sin
 Ensnar'd his soul; he trusted in himself;
 Security betray'd him, and he fell.

2d. Jew. Thy prudent counsels in our hearts
 shall live,

As if a pen of adamant had grav'd them.

1st Jew. The dawn approaches; let us part,
 my friend,

Secure of peace, since tyranny is fallen.

Dan. So perish all thine enemies, O Lord;

So mighty God, shall perish all who seek

Corrupted pleasures in the turbid waves

Of life's polluted stream, and madly quit

The living fountain of perennial grace!

DANIEL:

A SACRED DRAMA.

The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.

Proverbs of Solomon.

On peut des plus grands rois surprendre la justice.

Incapable de tromper,
 Ils ont peine à s'échapper
 Des picges de l'artifice.

Un cœur noble ne peut soupçonner en autrui

La bassesse et la malice
 Qu'il ne sent point en lui.

Esther. Tragedie de Racine.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

DARIUS, king of Media and Babylon.
 PHARNACES, } courtiers, enemies to Daniel.
 SORANUS, }

ARASPES, a young Median lord, friend and
 convert to Daniel.

DANIEL.

Scene—The city of Babylon.

The subject is taken from the sixth chapter of the prophet Daniel.

PART I.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

Phar. YES!—I have noted with a jealous eye,
 The pow'r of this new fav'rite! Daniel reigns,
 And not Darius! Daniel guides the springs
 Which move this mighty empire. High he sits,
 Supreme in favour with both prince and people.
 Where is the spirit of our Median lords,
 Tamely to crouch and bend the supple knee
 To this new god! By Mithras, 'tis too much!
 Shall great Arbaces' race to Daniel bow!
 A foreigner, a captive, and a Jew?
 Something must be devis'd, and that right soon,
 To shake his credit.

Sor. Rather hope to shake
 The mountain pine, whose twisting fibres clasp
 The earth, deep rooted! Rather hope to shake

The Scythian Taurus from his central base!

No—Daniel sits too absolute in pow'r,
 Too firm in favour, for the keenest shaft
 Of nicely-aiming jealousy to reach him.

Phar. Rather he sits too high to sit securely,
 Yes! he has reach'd that pinnacle of pow'r
 Which closely touches on depression's verge.
 Hast thou then liv'd in courts? hast thou grown
 gray

Beneath the mask a subtle statesman wears,
 To hide his secret soul, and dost not know
 That of all fickle Fortune's transient gifts,
 Favour is most deceitful? 'Tis a beam,
 Which darts uncertain brightness for a moment!
 The faint precarious, fickle shine of pow'r;
 Giv'n without merit, by caprice withdrawn.
 No trifle is so small as what obtains,
 Save that which loses favour, 'tis a breath,
 Which hangs upon a smile! A look, a word,

A frown, the air-built tower of fortune shakes,
And down the unsubstantial fabric falls!
Darius, just and clement as he is,
If I mistake not, may be wrought upon
By prudent wiles, by Flattery's pleasant cup,
Administer'd with caution.

Sor. But the means?
For Daniel's life (a foe must grant him that)
Is so replete with goodness, so adorn'd
With every virtue so exactly squar'd
By wisdom's nicest rules, 'twill be most hard
To charge him with the shadow of offence.
Pure is his fame as Scythia's mountain snows,
When not a breath pollutes them! O Pharnaces,
I've scann'd the actions of his daily life
With all th' industrious malice of a foe;
And nothing meets mine eye but deeds of honour!

In office pure; for equitable acts
Renown'd: in justic and impartial truth,
The Grecian Themis is not more severe.

Phar. By yon bright sun, thou blazon'st forth
his praise

As if with rapture thou did'st read the page
Where these fair deeds are written!

Sor. Thou mistak'st
I only meant to show what cause we have
To hate and fear him. I but meant to paint
His popular virtues and eclipsing merit
Then for devotion and religious zeal,
Who so renown'd as Daniel? Of his law
Observant in th' extreme. Thrice ev'ry day
With prostrate reverence, he adores his God:
With superstitious awe his face he turns
Tow'rds his belov'd Jerusalem, as if
Some local, partial God, might there be found
To hear his supplication. No affair
Of state, no business so importunate,
No pleasure so alluring, no employ
Of such high import, to seduce his zeal
From this observance due!

Phar. There, there he falls!
Enough my friend! His piety destroys him.
There, at the very footstool of his God,
Where he implores protection, there I'll crush
him.

Sor. What means Pharnaces?

Phar. Ask not what I mean,
The new idea floating in my brain
Has yet receiv'd no form. 'Tis yet too soon
To give it body, circumstance, or breath.
The seeds of mighty deeds are lab'ring here,
And struggling for a birth! 'Tis near the hour
The king is wont to summon us to council:
Ere that, this big conception of my mind
I'll shape to form and being. Thou, mean-
while,

Convene our chosen friends: for I shall need
The aid of all your councils, and the weight
of grave authority.

Sor. Who shall be trusted?

Phar. With our immediate motive none,
except

A chosen band of friends, who most repine
At Daniel's exaltation.—But the scheme
I meditate must be disclos'd to all
Who bear high office; all our Median rulers,
Princes and captains, presidents and lords;
All must assemble. 'Tis a common cause:
All but the young Araspes: he inclines

To Daniel and his God. He sits attent,
With ravish'd ears, to listen to his lore.
With rev'rence names Jerusalem, and reads
The volume of the law. No more he bows
To hail the golden Ruler of the Day,
But looks for some great Prophet, greater far,
So they pretend, than Mithras! From him
therefore,

Conceal whate'er of injury is devis'd
'Gainst Daniel. Be it to thy care to-day
To keep him from the council.

Sor. 'Tis well thought.
'Tis now about the hour of Daniel's prayer:
Araspes too is with him! and to day
They will not sit in council. Haste we then
Designs of high importance, once conceiv'd
Should be accomplish'd! Genius which dis-
cerns,

And courage which achieves, despise the aid
Of ling'ring Circumspection! The keen spirit
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought
Start into instant action, and at once
Plans and performs, resolves and executes!

PART II.

Scene—Daniel's house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Araspes. PROCEED, proceed, thrice venerable
sage,
Enlighten my dark mind with this new ray,
This dawning of salvation! Tell me more
Of this expected King! this Comforter!
This Promise of the nations! this great Hope
Of anxious Israel! This unborn Prophet!
This wonderful, this mighty Counsellor!
This everlasting Lord! this Prince of Peace!
This balm of Gilead, which shall heal the
wounds

Of universal nature! this Messiah!
Redeemer, Saviour, Sufferer, Victim, God!

Dan. Enough to animate our faith, we know,
But not enough to soothe the curious pride
Of vain philosophy! Enough to cheer
Our path we see, the rest is hid in clouds;
And heaven's own shadows rest upon the view!

Aras. Go on blest sage! I could for ever hear,
Untir'd, thy admonition! tell me how
I shall obtain the favour of that God
I but begin to know, but fain would serve.

Dan. By deep humility, by faith unfeign'd,
By holy deeds, best proof of living faith!
O Faith,* thou wonder-working principle,
Eternal substance of our present hope,
Thou evidence of things invisible!
What cannot man sustain, sustain'd by thee!
The time would fail, and the bright star of day
Would quench his beams in ocean, and resign
His empire to the silver queen of night;
And she again descend the steep of heaven,
If I should tell what wonders Faith achiev'd
By Gideon, Barak, and the holy seer,
Elkanah's son; the pious Gileadite,
Ill-fated Jephthah! He of Zorah toot
In strength unequal'd; and the shepherd-king,
Who vanquish'd Gath's fell giant! Need I tell
Of holy prophets, who by conquer'ing Faith,

* Hebrews, chap. xi.

† Samson.

Wrought deeds incredible to mortal sense ;
Vanquish'd contending kingdoms, quell'd the
rage

Of furious pestilence, extinguish'd fire !
Victorious Faith ! others by thee endur'd
Exile, disgrace, captivity, and death !
Some uncomplaining, bore (nor be it deem'd
The meanest exercise of well-try'd Faith)
The cruel mocking, and the bitter taunt,
Foul obloquy, and undeserv'd reproach :
Despising shame, that death to human pride !

Aras. How shall this faith be sought ?

Dan. By earnest prayer,
Solicit first the wisdom from above :
Wisdom, whose fruits are purity and peace !
Wisdom ! that bright intelligence, which sat
Supreme, when with his golden compasses*
Th' Eternal plann'd the fabric of the world,
Produc'd his fair idea into light,
And said, that all was good ! Wisdom, blest
beam !

The brightness of the everlasting light !
The spotless mirror of the power of God !
The reflex image of th' all perfect Mind !
A stream translucent, flowing from the source
Of glory infinite ! a cloudless light !
Defilement cannot touch nor sin pollute
Her unstain'd purity ! Not Ophir's gold,
Nor Ethiopia's gems can match her price !
The ruby of the mine is pale before her !
And, like the oil Elisha's bounty bless'd,
She is a treasure which doth grow by use,
And multiply by spending ! She contains,
Within herself the sum of excellence.
If riches are desir'd, wisdom is wealth !
If prudence, where shall keen Invention find
Artificer more cunning ? If renown,
In her right hand it comes ! If piety,
Are not her labours virtues ? If the lore
Which sage Experience teaches, lo ! she scans
Antiquity's dark truths ; the past she knows,
Anticipates the future ; not by arts
Forbidden, of Chaldean sorcerer,
But from the piercing ken of deep Foreknow-
ledge.

From her sure science of the human heart
She weighs effects with causes, ends with
means ;

Resolving all into the sovereign will.
For earthly blessings moderate be thy pray'r
And qualified ; for light, for strength, for grace,
Unbound thy petition.

Aras. Now, O prophet !
Explain the secret doubts which rack my mind,
And my weak sense confound. Give me some
line

To sound the depths of Providence ! O say,
Why the ungodly prosper ? why their root
Shoots deep, and their thick branches flourish
fair,

Like the green bay tree ? why the righteous
man,

Like tender plants to shiv'ring winds expos'd,
Is strip'd and torn, in naked Virtue bare,
And nipp'd by cruel Sorrow's biting blast ?
Explain, O Daniel, these mysterious ways
To my faint apprehension ! For as yet
I've much to learn. Fair Truth's immortal sun

* See Paradise Lost, book vii. line 225. Proverbs,
chap. viii. ver. 27.

Is sometimes hid in clouds ; not that her light
Is in itself defective ; but obscur'd
By my weak prejudice. imperfect Faith,
And all the thousand causes which obstruct
The growth of goodness.

Dan. Follow me, *Araspes*.
Within thou shalt peruse the sacred page,
The book of life eternal ! that will show thee
The end of the ungodly ; thou wilt own
How short their longest period ; wilt perceive
How black a night succeeds their brightest day !
Thy purged eye will see God is not slack,
As men count slackness, to fulfil his word.
Weigh well this book ; and may the Spirit of
grace,

Who stamp'd the seal of truth on the bless'd
page,

Descend into thy soul, remove thy doubts,
Clear the perplex'd, and solve the intricate,
Till faith be lost in sight, and hope in joy !

PART III.

*DARIUS on his throne—PHARNACES, SORANUS
princes, presidents, and courtiers.*

Pharn. Hail ! king Darius, live for ever !
Darius. Welcome !
Welcome my princes, presidents, and friends !
Now tell me, has your wisdom aught devis'd
To aid the commonwealth ? In our new empire,
Subdu'd Chaldaea, is there aught remains
Your prudence can suggest to serve the state,
To benefit the subject, to redress
And raise the injur'd, to assist the oppress'd,
And humble the oppressor ? If you know,
Speak freely, princes ! Why am I a king,
Except to poise the awful scale of justice
With even hand ; to minister to want ;
To bless the nations with a lib'ral rule,
Vicergerant of th' eternal Oromasdes ?

Phar. So absolute thy wisdom, mighty king,
All counsel were superfluous.

Darius. Hold, Pharnaces !
No adulation ; 'tis the death of virtue ;
Who flatters is of all mankind the lowest,
Save he who courts flattery. Kings are men,
As feeble and as frail as those they rule,
And born like them, to die. The Lydian mo-
narch,

Unhappy Cræsus, lately sat aloft,
Almost above mortality ; now see him !
Sunk to the vile condition of a slave,
He swells the train of Cyrus ! I, like him,
To misery am obnoxious. See this throne ;
This royal throne the great Nebassar fill'd ;
Yet hence his pride expell'd him ! Yonder wall,
The dread terrific writing to the eyes
Of proud Belshazzar show'd ; sad monuments
Of Heav'n's tremendous vengeance ! and shall I,
Unwarn'd by such examples, cherish pride ?
Yet to their dire calamities I owe
The brightest gem that glistens in my crown,
Sage Daniel. If my speech have aught of worth,
Or if my life with aught of good be grac'd,
To him alone I owe it.

Soranus (aside to Pharnaces.) Now Phar-
naces,
Will he run o'er and dwell upon his praise,

As if we ne'er had heard it; nay, will swell
The nauseous catalogue with many a virtue
His own fond fancy coins.

Phar. O, great Darius!
Let thine unworthy servant's words find grace,
And meet acceptance in his royal ear,
Who subjugates the east! Let not the king
With anger hear my pray'r.

Darius. Pharnaces, speak;
I know thou lov'st me; I but meant to chide
Thy flatt'ry, not reprove thee for thy zeal.
Speak boldly, friends, as man should speak to man.

Perish the barb'rous maxims of the east,
Which basely would enslave the free-born mind,
And plunder man of the best gift of Heav'n,
His liberty of soul.

Phar. Darius! hear me.
Thy princes, and the captains of thy bands,
Thy presidents, the nobles who bear rule
O'er provinces, and I, thine humble creature.
Less than the least in merit, but in love,
In zeal, and duty, equal with the first,
We have devis'd a measure to confirm
Thy infant empire, to establish firmly
Thy pow'r and new dominion, and secure
Thy growing greatness past the pow'r of
change.

Darius. I am prepar'd to hear thee. Speak
Pharnaces.

Phar. The wretched Babylonians long have
groan'd

Beneath the rule of princes, weak or rash.
The rod of pow'r was sway'd alike amiss,
By feeble Merodach and fierce Belshazzar.
One let the slacken'd reins too loosely float
Upon the people's neck, and lost his pow'r
By nerveless relaxation. He, who follow'd,
Held with a tyrant's hand the cruel curb,
And check'd the groaning nation till it bled;
On different rocks they met one common ruin.
Their edicts were irresolute, their laws
Were feebly plann'd, their counsels ill advis'd;
Now so relax'd, and now so overstrain'd,
That the tir'd people, wearied with the weight
They long have borne, will soon disdain con-
troul,

Tread on all rule, and spurn the hand that
guides 'em.

Darius. But say what remedy?

Phar. That too, O king!
Thy servants have provided. Hitherto
They bare the yoke submissive. But to fix
Thy pow'r and their obedience, to reduce
All hearts to thy dominion, yet avoid
Those deeds of cruelty thy nature starts at,
Thou should'st begin by some imperial act
Of absolute dominion, yet unstain'd
By aught of barbarous. For know, O king!
Wholesome severity, if wisely fram'd
With sober discipline, procures more reverence
Than all the lenient counsels and weak mea-
sures

Of frail irresolution.

Darius. Now proceed

To thy request.

Phar. Not I, but all request it.
Be thy imperial edict issued straight,
And let a firm decree be this day pass'd,
Irrevocable as our Median laws.

Ordain, that for the space of thirty days
No subject in thy realm shall aught request
Of God or man, except of thee, O king!

Darius. Wherefore this strange decree?

Phar. 'Twill fix the crown
With lasting safety on thy royal brow,
And, by a bloodless means, preserve th' obe-
dience

Of this new empire. Think how much 'twill
raise

Thy high renown! 'Twill make thy name re-
ver'd,

And popular beyond example. What!
To be as Heav'n, dispensing good and ill
For thirty days! With thine own ears to hear
Thy people's wants, with thine own lib'ral hands
To bless thy suppliant subjects! O, Darius!
Thoult seem as bounteous as a giving God!
And reign in ev'ry heart in Babylon
As well as Media! What a glorious state,
To be the sovereign arbiter of good!
The first efficient cause of happiness!
To scatter mercies with a plenteous hand,
And to be blest thyself in blessing others!

Darius. Is this the gen'ral wish?

[*Princes and courtiers kneel.*

Chief president. Of one, of all.

Behold thy princes, presidents and lords,
Thy counsellors, and captains! See, O king!

[*Presents the edict.*

Behold the instrument our zeal has drawn;
The edict is prepar'd. We only wait
The confirmation of thy gracious word,
And thy imperial signet.

Darius. Say, Pharnaces,
What penalty awaits the man who dares
Transgress our mandate?

Phar. Instant death, O king!
This statute says; 'Should any subject dare
Petition, for the space of thirty days,
Of God or man, except of thee, O king!
He shall be thrown into yon dreadful den
Of hungry lions!'

Darius. Hold! Methinks a deed
Of such importance should be wisely weigh'd.

Phar. We have resolv'd it, mighty king!
with care,

With closest scrutiny. On us devolve
Whatever blame occurs!

Darius. I'm satisfy'd.

Then to your wisdom I commit me, princes.
Behold the royal signet: see 'tis done.

Phar. (aside) There Daniel fell! That signet
seal'd his doom.

Darius (after a pause.) Let me reflect—Sure
I have been too rash!

Why such intemp'rate haste? But you are
wise;

And would not counsel this severe decree
But for the wisest purpose. Yet, methinks,
I might have weigh'd, and in my mind resolv'd
This statute, ere, the royal signet stamp'd,
It had been past repeal. Sage Daniel, too!

My counsellor, my guide, my well-try'd friend,
He should have been consulted; he, whose wis-
dom

I still have found oracular!

Phar. Mighty king!

'Tis as it should be. The decree is past
Irrevocable, as the steadfast law

Of Mede and Persian, which can never change.
Those who observe it live, as is most meet,
High in thy grace;—who violate it, die.

PART IV.

Scene—DANIEL'S house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Araspes. Oh, holy Daniel! prophet, father,
friend,
I come the wretched messenger of ill!
Thy foes complot thy death. For what can
mean

This new-made law, extorted from the king
Almost by force? What can it mean, O Daniel,
But to involve thee in the toils they spread
To snare thy precious life?

Daniel. How! was the king
Consenting to this edict?

Araspes. They surpris'd
His easy nature; took him when his heart
Was soften'd by their blandishments. They
were

The mask of public virtue to deceive him.
Beneath the specious name of general good,
They wrought him to their purposes: no time
Allow'd him to deliberate. One short hour,
Another moment, and his soul had gain'd
Her natural tone of virtue.

Daniel. That great Power
Who suffers evil only to produce
Some unseen good, permits that this should be:
And He permitting, I, well pleas'd resign.
Retire, my friend: this is my second hour
Of daily pray'r. Anon we'll meet again.
Here in the open face of that bright sun
Thy fathers worshipp'd, will I offer up,
As is my rule, petitions to my God,
For thee, for me, for Solyma, for all!

Araspes. Oh, stay! what mean'st thou! sure
thou hast not heard

The edict of the king? I thought but now,
Thou knew'st its purport. It expressly says,
That no petition henceforth shall be made,
For thirty days save only to the king;
Nor pray'r nor intercession shall be heard
Of any God or man, but of Darius.

Dan. And think'st thou then my reverence
for the king,

Good as he is, shall tempt me to renounce
My sworn allegiance to the King of kings?
Hast thou commanded legions? strove in battle,
Defy'd the face of danger, mock'd at death
In all its frightful forms, and tremblest now?
Come learn of me; I'll teach thee to be bold,
Though sword I never drew! Fear not, Araspes,
The feeble vengeance of a mortal man,
Whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein
Is he to be accounted of? but fear
The awaken'd vengeance of the living Lord
He who can plunge the everlasting soul
In infinite perdition!

Aras. Then, O Daniel!
If thou persist to disobey the edict,
Retire and hide thee from the prying eyes
Of busy malice!

Dan. He who is asham'd
Vol. I.

To vindicate the honour of his God,
Of him the living Lord shall be asham'd
When he shall judge the tribes!

Aras. Yet, O remember,
Oft have I heard thee say, the secret heart
Is fair devotion's temple; there the saint,
E'en on that living altar, lights the flame
Of purest sacrifice, which burns unseen,
Not unaccepted.—I remember too,
When Syrian Naaman* by Elisha's hand,
Was cleans'd from foul pollution, and his mind
Enlighten'd by the miracle, confess'd
The Almighty God of Jacob: that he deem'd it
No flagrant violation of his faith
To bend at Rimmon's shrine; nor did the seer
Forbid the rite external.

Dan. Know, Araspes,
Heav'n designs to suit our trials to our strength,
A recent convert, feeble in his faith:
Naaman, perhaps, had sunk beneath the weight
Of so severe a duty. Gracious Heav'n
Forbears to bruise the reed, or quench the flax
When feeble and expiring. But shall I,
Shall Daniel, shall the servant of the Lord,
A vet'ran in his cause—long train'd to know
And do his will—long exercis'd in wo,
Bred in captivity and born to suffer;
Shall I, from known, from certain duty shrink
To shun a threaten'd danger? O, Araspes!
Shall I, advanc'd in age, in zeal decline?
Grow careless as I reach my journey's end
And slacken in my pace, the goal in view?
Perish discretion, when it interferes
With duty! Perish the false policy
Of human wit, which would commute our safety
With God's eternal honour! Shall His law
Be set at nought, that I may live at ease?
How would the Heathen triumph, should I fall
Through coward fear! How would God's
enemies

Insultingly blaspheme!

Aras. Yet think a moment.

Dan. No!—
Where evil may be *done*, 'tis right to ponder;
Where only *suffer'd* know the shortest pause
Is much too long. Had great Darius paus'd,
This ill had been prevented. But for me,
Araspes, to deliberate is to sin.

Aras. Think of thy pow'r, thy favour with
Darius:

Think of thy life's importance to the tribes,
Scarce yet return'd in safety. Live! O, live!
To serve the cause of God!

Dan. God will himself
Sustain his righteous cause. He knows to raise
Fit instruments to serve him. Know, Araspes,
He does not need our crimes to help his cause,
Nor does his equitable law permit
A sinful act, from the prepost'rous plea
That good may follow it. For me, my friend,
The spacious earth holds not a bait to tempt me.
What would it profit me, if I should gain
Imperial Ecbatan, th' extended land
Of fruitful Media, nay, the world's wide empire,
If mine eternal soul must be the price?
Farewell, my friend! time presses. I have
stol'n

Some moments from my duty to confirm

* Kings. chap v.

And strengthen thy young faith ! Let us fulfil
What Heav'n enjoins, and leave to Heav'n the
event !

PART V.

Scene—The Palace.

PHARNACES, SORANUS.

Phar. 'Tis done—success has crown'd our
scheme, Soranus;
And Daniel falls into the deep-laid toils
Our prudence spread.

Sor. That he should fall so soon,
Astonishes e'en me ! what ! not a day !
What ! not a single moment to defer
His rash devotions ? Madly thus to rush
On certain peril quite transcends belief !
When happen'd it, Pharnaces ?

Phar. On the instant :
Scarce is the deed accomplish'd. As he made
His ostentations pray'r, e'en in the face
Of the bright God of day, all Babylon
Beheld the insult offer'd to Darius.
For, as in bold defiance of the law,
His windows were not clos'd. Our chosen bands,
Whom we had plac'd to note him, straight
rush'd in,

And seiz'd him in the warmth of his blind zeal,
Ere half his pray'r was finish'd. Young Araspes,
With all the wild extravagance of grief,
Prays, weeps, and threatens. Daniel silent
stands,

With patient resignation, and prepares
To follow them.—But see, the king approaches !

Sor. How's this ? deep sorrow sits upon his
brow,
And stern resentment fires his angry eye !

Enter DARIUS.

Dar. O, deep-laid stratagem ! O, artful wile !
To take me unpar'd, to wound my heart,
E'en where it feels most tenderly, in friendship !
To stab my fame ! to hold me up a mark
To future ages, for the perjur'd prince
Who slew the friend he lov'd ! O Daniel, Daniel,
Who now shall trust Darius ? Not a slave
In my wide empire, from the Indian main
To the cold Caspian, but is more at case
Than I, his monarch ! Yes ! I've done a deed
Will blot my honour with eternal stain !
Pharnaces ! O, thou hoary sycophant !
Thou wily politician ! thou hast snar'd
Thy unsuspecting master !

Phar. Great Darius,
Let not resentment blind thy royal eyes.
In what am I to blame ? who could suspect
This obstinate resistance to the law ?
Who could foresee that Daniel would perforce
Oppose the king's decree ?

Dar. Thou, thou foresaw'st it !
Thou know'st his righteous soul would ne'er
endure
So long an interval of pray'r. But I,
Deluded king ! 'twas I should have foreseen
His steadfast piety. I should have thought
Your earnest warmth had some more secret
source,

Something that touch'd you nearer than your
love,

Your well-feign'd zeal for me.—I should have
known

When selfish politicians, hackney'd long
In fraud and artifice, affect a glow
Of patriot fervour, or fond loyalty,
Which scorns all show of interest, that's the
moment

To watch their crook'd projects.—Well thou
know'st

How dear I held him ; how I priz'd his truth
Did I not choose him from a subject world,
Unbless'd by fortune, and by birth ungrac'd,
A captive and a Jew ? Did I not love him ?
Was he not rich in independent worth ?
And great in native goodness ? That undid him !
There, there he fell ! If he had been less great,
He had been safe. Thou could'st not bear his
brightness ;

The lustre of his virtues quite obscur'd,
And dimm'd thy fainter merit. Rash old man !
Go, and devise some means to set me free
From this dread load of guilt ! Go set at work
Thy plotting genius to redeem the life
Of venerable Daniel !

Phar. 'Tis too late.
He has offended 'gainst the new decree ;
Has dar'd to make petition to his God,
Although the dreadful sentence of the act
Full well he knew. And by th' established law
Of Media, by that irrevocable,
Which he has dar'd to violate, he dies !

Dar. Impiety ! presumption ! monstrous law !
Irrevocable ? Is there aught on earth
Deserves that name ? Th' eternal laws alone
Of Oromasdes are unchangeable !

All human projects are so faintly fram'd,
So feebly plann'd, so liable to change,
So mix'd with error in their very form,
That mutable and mortal are the same.
But where is Daniel ! Wherefore comes he not
To load me with reproaches ? to upbraid me
With all the wrongs my barbarous haste has
done him !

Where is he ?

Phar. He prepares to meet his fate.
This hour he dies, for the act so decrees.

Dar. Suspend the bloody sentence. Bring
him hither.

Or rather let me seek him and implore
His dying pardon, and his parting pray'r.

PART VI.

Scene—Daniel's house.

DANIEL, ARASPES.

Ara. STILL let me follow thee ; still let me
hear

The voice of Wisdom, ere the silver cord
By death's cold hand be loosen'd.

Dan. Now I'm ready !
No grief, no woman's weakness, good Araspes !
Thou should'st rejoice my pilgrimage is o'er,
And the blest heaven of repose in view.

Ara. And must I loose thee, Daniel ? must
thou die !

Dan. And what is death, my friend, that I should fear it?

To die! why 'tis to triumph; 'tis to join
The great assembly of the good and just;
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints!
Oh! 'tis to join the band of holy men,
Made perfect by their sufferings! 'Tis to meet
My great progenitors! 'Tis to behold
Th' illustrious patriarchs; they with whom the
Lord

Deign'd hold familiar converse. 'Tis to see
Bless'd Noah and his children, once a world!
'Tis to behold, oh, rapture to conceive!
Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost be-
low!

Bold Azariah, and the band of brothers,
Who sought, in bloom of youth, the scorching
flames!

Nor shall we see heroic men alone,
Champions who fought the fight of faith on
earth;

But heavenly conquerors, angelic hosts,
Michael and his bright legions, who subdu'd
The foes of truth! To join their blest employ
Of love and praise! to the high melodies
Of choirs celestial to attune my voice,
Accordant to the golden harps of saints!
To join in blest hosannahs to their king!
Whose face to see, whose glory to behold,
Alone were heaven, though saint or seraph none
Should meet our sight, and only God were there!
This is to die! Who would not die for this?
Who would not die, that he might live for ever?

DARIUS, DANIEL, ARASPES.

Dar. Where is he? where is Daniel?—Let
me see him!

Let me embrace that venerable form,
Which I have doom'd to glut the greedy maw
Of furious lions!

Dan. King Darius, hail!

Dar. O, injur'd Daniel, can I see thee thus!
Thus uncomplaining! can I bear to hear
That when the ruffian ministers of death
Stopp'd thy unfinished pray'r, thy pious lips
Had just invok'd a blessing on Darius,
On him who sought thy life? Thy murderers
drop

Tears of strange pity. Look not on me thus
With mild benignity! Oh! I could bear
The voice of keen reproach, or the strong flash
Of fierce resentment; but I cannot stand
That touching silence, nor that patient eye
Of meek respect.

Dan. Thou art my master still.

Dar. I am thy murderer! I have sign'd thy
death!

Dan. I know thy bent of soul is honourable:
Thou hast been gracious still! Were it not so,
I would have met the appointment of high
Heaven

With humble acquiescence; but to know
Thy will concurr'd not with thy servant's fate,
Adds joy to resignation.

Dar. Here I swear
By him who sits enthron'd in yon bright sun,
Thy blood shall be aton'd! On these thy foes,
Thou shalt have ample vengeance.

Dan. Hold, O king!
Vengeance is mine, th' eternal Lord hath said;

Myself will recompense with even hand,
The sinner for the sin. The wrath of man
Works not the righteousness of God!

Dar. I had hop'd
We should have trod this busy stage together
A little longer, then have sunk to rest
In honourable age! Who now shall guide
My shatter'd bark in safety? who shall now
Direct me? O, unhappy state of kings!

'Tis well the robe of majesty is gay,
Or who would put it on? A crown! what is it?
It is to bear the miseries of a people!
To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,
And sink beneath a load of splendid care!
To have your best success ascrib'd to Fortune,
And Fortune's failures all ascrib'd to you!

It is to sit upon a joyless height,
To every blast of changing fate expos'd!
Too high for hope! too great for happiness!
For friendship too much fear'd! To all the joys
Of social freedom, and th' endearing charm
Of lib'ral interchange of soul unknown!
Fate meant me an exception to the rest,
And though a monarch, bless'd me with a friend;
And I—have murder'd him!

Dan. My hour approaches
Hate not my mem'ry, king: protect Araspes:
Encourage Cyrus in the holy work
Of building ruin'd Solyma. Farewell!

Dar. With most religious strictness I'll fulfil
Thy last request. Araspes shall be next
My throne and heart. Farewell!

(*They embrace.*)

Hear, future kings!

Ye unborn rulers of the nation, hear!
Learn from my crime, from my misfortune
learn,
Never to trust to weak or wicked hands,
That delegated pow'r which Oromasdes
Invests in monarchs for the public good.

PART VII.

Scene—The court of the palace.—The sun rising

DARIUS, ARASPES.

Dar. Oh, good Araspes! what a night of hor-
ror!

To me the dawning day brings no return
Of cheerfulness or peace! No balmy sleep
Has seal'd these eyes, no nourishment has past
These loathing lips, since Daniel's fate was
sign'd!

Hear what my fruitless penitence resolves—
That thirty days my rashness had decreed
The edict's force should last, I will devote
To mourning and repentance, fasting, pray'r
And all due rites of grief. For thirty days
No pleasant sound of dulcimer or harp,
Sackbut or flute, or psaltery, shall charm
My ear, now dead to ev'ry note of joy!

Aras. My grief can know no period!

Dar. See that den!
There Daniel met the furious lion's rage!
There were the patient martyr's mangled limbs
Torn piece-meal! Never hide thy tears, Araspes!
'Tis virtuous sorrow, unalloy'd, like mine,
By guilt and fell remorse! Let us approach:

Who knows but that dread Pow'r to whom he
pray'd

So often and so fervently, has heard him !

[*He goes to the mouth of the den.*]

O Daniel, servant of the living God !

He whom thou hast serv'd so long, and lov'd so
well,

From the devouring lions' famish'd jaws,

Can he deliver thee ?

Dan. (from the bottom of the den.) He can—
he has !

Dar. Methought I heard him speak !

Aras. O, wond'rous force

Of strong imagination ! were thy voice

Loud as the trumpet's blast, it could not wake
him

From that eternal sleep !

Dan. (in the den.) Hail, king Darius !

The God I serve has shut the lions' mouths,

To vindicate my innocence.

Dar. He speaks !

He lives !

Aras. 'Tis no illusion : 'tis the sound

Of his known voice.

Dar. Where are my servants ? Haste,

Fly, swift as lightning, free him from the den ;

Release him, bring him hither ! break the seal

Which keeps him from me ! See, Araspes ! look !

See the charm'd lions !—Mark their mild de-
meanor :

Araspes, mark !—they have no pow'r to hurt
him !

See how they hang their heads and smooth their
fierceness

At his mild aspect !

Aras. Who that sees this sight,

Who that in after times shall hear this told,

Can doubt if Daniel's God be God indeed ?

Dar. None, none, Araspes !

Aras. Ah, he comes, he comes !

Enter DANIEL, followed by multitudes.

Dan. Hail, great Darius !

Dar. Dost thou live indeed !

And live unhurt ?

Aras. O, miracle of joy !

Dar. I scarce can trust my eyes ! How didst
thou 'scape ?

Dan. That bright and glorious Being, who
vouchsaf'd

Presence divine, when the three martyr'd bro-
thers

Essay'd the caldron's flame, supported me !

E'en in the furious lions' dreadful den,

The prisoner of hope, even there I turn'd

To the strong hold, the bulwark of my strength,

Ready to hear, and mighty to redeem !

Dar. (to Aras.) Where is Pharnaces ? Take
the hoary traitor !

Take too Soranus, and the chief abettors

Of this dire edict : let not one escape.

The punishment their deep-laid hate devis'd

For holy Daniel, on their heads shall fall

With tenfold vengeance. To the lion's den

I doom his vile accusers ! All their wives,

Their children too, shall share one common fate !

Take care that none escape—Go, good Araspes.

[*Araspes goes out.*]

Dan. Not so, Darius !

O spare the guiltless ; spare the guilty too !

Where sin is not, to punish were unjust ;
And where sin is, O king, there fell remorse
Supplies the place of punishment !

Dar. No more !

My word is past ! Not one request, save this,
Shalt thou e'er make in vain. Approach, my
friends ;

Araspes has already spread the tale,

And see what crowds advance !

Peo. Long live Darius !

Long live great Daniel too, the people's friend !

Dar. Draw near, my subjects. See this holy
man ! [band

Death had no pow'r to harm him. Yon fell

Of famish'd lions, soften'd at his sight,

Forgot their nature, and grew tame before him.

The mighty God protects his servants thus !

The righteous thus he rescues from the snare,

While Fraud's artificer himself shall fall

In the deep gulf his wily arts devise

To snare the innocent !

A courtier.

To the same den

Araspes bears Pharnaces and his friends :

Fallen is their insolence ! With prayers and
tears

And all the meanness of high-crested pride,

When adverse fortune frowns, they beg for life.

Araspes will not hear. 'You heard not me,'

He cries, 'When I for Daniel's life implor'd ;

His God protected him ! see now if your's

Will listen to your cries !'

Dar.

Now hear,

People and nations, languages and realms,

O'er whom I rule ! Peace be within your walls !

That I may banish from the minds of men

The rash decree gone out ; hear me resolve

To counteract its force by one more just.

In ev'ry kingdom of my wide-stretch'd realm

From fair Chaldea to the extremest bound

Of northern Media, be my edict sent,

And this my statute known. My heralds haste,

And spread my royal mandate through the land,

That all my subjects bow the ready knee

To Daniel's God—for HE alone is LORD.

Let all adore, and tremble at his name,

Who sits in glory unapproachable

Above the heavens—above the heaven of hea-
vens !

His pow'r is everlasting ; and HIS throne,

Founded in equity and truth, shall last

Beyond the bounded reign of time and space

Through wide eternity ! With HIS right arm

He saves, and who opposes ? HE defends,

And who shall injure ? In the perilous den

HE rescu'd Daniel from the lions' mouths ;

His common deeds are wonders ; all HIS works

One ever-during chain of miracles !

Enter ARASPES.

Aras. All hail, O king ! Darius, live for ever !

May all thy foes be as Pharnaces is !

Dar. Araspes, speak !

Aras. O, let me spare the tale !—

'Tis full of horror ! Dreadful was the sight !

The hungry lions, greedy for their prey,

Devour'd the wretched princes ere they reach'd

The bottom of the den.

Dar.

Now, now confess

'Twas some superior hand restrain'd their rage,

And tam'd their furious appetites.

People.

'Tis true.

The God of Daniel is a mighty God !
He saves and He destroys.
Aras. O, friend ! O, Daniel !

No wav'ring doubts can ever more disturb
My settled faith.
Dan. To God be all the glory !

REFLECTIONS OF KING HEZEKIAH

IN HIS SICKNESS.

'Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die.'—*Isaiah*, xxxviii.

WHAT, and no more ?—Is this my soul, said I,
My whole of being ! Must I surely die ?
Be robb'd at once of health, of strength, of time,
Of youth's fair promise, and of pleasure's prime ?
Shall I no more behold the face of morn,
The cheerful daylight, and the spring's return ?
Must I the festive pow'r the banquet leave,
For the dull chambers of the darksome grave !

Have I consider'd what it is to die ?
In native dust with kindred worms to lie ;
To sleep in cheerless, cold neglect ! to rot !
My body loath'd, my very name forgot !
Not one of all those parasites, who bend
The supple knee, their monarch to attend !
What, not one friend ! No, not an hireling slave
Shall hail great Hezekiah in the grave.
Where's he who falsely claim'd the name of
great ?

Whose eye was terror, and whose frown was
fate ?

Who aw'd an hundred nations from the throne ?
See where he lies, dumb, friendless, and alone !
Which grain of dust proclaims the noble birth ?
Which is the royal particle of earth ?
Where are the marks, the princely ensigns
where ?

Which is the slave, and which great David's
heir ?

Alas ! the beggar's ashes are not known
From his who lately sat on Israel's throne !

How stands my great account ? My soul sur-
vey

The debt Eternal Justice bids thee pay !
Should I frail Memory's records strive to blot,
Will Heaven's tremendous reck'ning be forgot ?
Can I, alas ! the awful volume tear ?

Or raze one page of the dread register ?

'Prepare thy house, thy heart in order set ;
Prepare the Judge of Heaven and earth to meet.'
So spake the warning prophet.—Awful words !
Which fearfully my troubled soul record.

Am I prepar'd ? and can I meet my doom,
Nor shudder at the dreaded wrath to come ?

Is all in order set, my house, my heart ?
Does not besetting sin still claim a part ?
No cherish'd error, loth to quit its place,
Obstruct within my soul the work of grace ?

Did I each day for this great day prepare,
By righteous deeds, by sin-subduing pray'r ?
Did I each night, each day's offence repent,
And each unholy thought and word lament ?
Still have these ready hands th' afflicted fed,
And minister'd to Want her daily bread ?

The cause I knew not, did I well explore ?

Friend, advocate, and parent of the poor ?

Did I to gratify some sudden gust

Of thoughtless appetite, some impious lust

Of pleasure or of pow'r, such sums employ
As would have flush'd pale penury with joy ?
Did I in groves forbidden altars raise,
Or molten gods adore, or idols praise
Did my firm faith to Heaven still point the way ?
Did charity to man my actions sway ?
Did meek-ey'd Patience all my steps attend ?
Did gen'rous Candour mark me for her friend ?
Did I unjustly seek to build my name
On the pil'd ruins of another's fame ?
Did I abhor, as hell, the insidious lie,
The low deceit, the unmanly calumny ?
Did my fix'd soul the impious wit detest ?
Did my firm virtue scorn th' unhallow'd jest ?
The sneer profane, and the good ridicule
Of shallow Infidelity's dull school ?
Did I still live as born one day to die,
And view th' eternal world with constant eye ?

If so I liv'd, if so I kept thy word,
In mercy view, in mercy hear me, Lord !

For oh ! how strict soe'er I kept thy law,
From mercy only all my hopes I draw !
My holiest deeds *indulgence* will require ;
The best but to *forgiveness* will aspire ;
If thou my purest services regard,
'Twill be with pardon only, not reward !

How imperfection's stamp'd on all below !
How sin intrudes in all we say or do !
How late in all the insolence of health,
I charm'd th' Assyrian* by my boast of wealth !
How fondly with elab'rate pomp display'd
My glitt'ring treasures ! with what triumph laid
My gold and gems before his dazzled eyes,
And found a rich reward in his surprise ?

O, mean of soul ! can wealth elate the heart,
Which of the man himself is not a part !
O, poverty of pride ! O, foul disgrace !
Disgusted Reason, blushing hides her face
Mortal and proud ! strange contradicting terms !
Pride for death's victim, for the prey of worms !
Of all the wonders which th' eventful life
Of man presents ! of all the mental strife
Of warring passions ; all the raging fires
Of furious appetites and mad desires,
Not one so strange appears as this alone,
That man is proud of what is not his own !

How short is human life ! the very breath !
Which frames my words, accelerates my death.
Of this short life how large a portion's fled !
To what is gone I am already dead ;
As dead to all my years and minutes past,
As I, to what remains, shall be at last.
Can I past miseries so far forget,
To view my vanish'd years with fond regret ?

* This is an anachronism. Hezekiah did not show his treasures to the Assyrian till after his recovery from his sickness.

Can I again my worn-out fancy cheat ?
 Indulge fresh hope ? solicit new deceit ?
 Of all the vanities weak man admires,
 Which greatness gives, youth hopes, or pride
 desires,
 Of these, my soul, which hast thou not enjoy'd ?
 With each, with all, thy sated pow'rs are cloy'd.
 What can I then expect from length of days ?
 More wealth, more wisdom, pleasure, health,
 or praise ?
 More pleasure ! hope not that, deluded king !
 For when did age increase of pleasure bring ?
 Is health, of years prolong'd the common boast ?
 And dear-earn'd Fame, is it not cheaply lost ?
 More wisdom ! that indeed were happiness ;
 That were a wish a king might well confess ;
 But when did Wisdom covet length of days ?
 Or seek its bliss in pleasures, wealth, or praise ?
 No :—Wisdom views with an indifferent eye
 All finite joys, all blessings born to die.
 The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
 Compell'd to starve at an unreal feast ;
 A spark, which upward tends by nature's force ;
 A stream diverted from its parent source ;
 A drop, dissever'd from the boundless sea ;
 A moment parted from eternity :
 A pilgrim panting for the rest to come ;
 An exile, anxious for his native home.
 Why should I ask my forfeit life to save ?
 Is heaven unjust, which dooms me to the grave ?
 Was I with hope of endless days deceiv'd ?
 Or of lov'd life am I alone bereav'd ?
 Let all the great, the rich, the learn'd, the wise,
 Let all the shades of Judah's monarchs rise,
 And say, if genius, learning, empire, wealth,

Youth, beauty, virtue, strength, renown or health,
 Has once revers'd th' immutable decree
 On Adam pass'd of man's mortality ?
 What have these eyes ne'er seen the felon worm
 The damask cheek devour, the finish'd form ?
 On the pale rose of blasted beauty feed,
 And riot on the lip so lately red ?
 Where are our fathers ? Where th' illustrious line
 Of holy prophets, and of seers divine ?
 Live they for ever ? Do they shun the grave ?
 Or when did Wisdom its professor save ?
 When did the brave escape ? When did the
 breath
 Of Eloquence charm the dull ear of Death ?
 When did the cunning argument avail,
 The polish'd period, or the varnish'd tale ;
 The eye of lightning, or the soul of fire,
 Which thronging thousands crowded to admire ?
 E'en while we praise the verse the poet dies ;
 And silent as his lyre great David lies.
 Thou, blest Isaiah ! who at God's command,
 Now speak'st repentance to a guilty land,
 Must die ! as wise and good thou hadst not
 been,
 As Nebat's son, who taught the land to sin !
 And shall I then be spar'd ? O monstrous
 pride !
 Shall I escape when Solomon has died ?
 If all the worth of all the saints were vain—
 Peace, peace, my troubled soul, nor dare com-
 plain !
 Lord, I submit. Complete thy gracious will !
 For if thou slay me, I will trust Thee still.
 O be my will so swallow'd up in thine,
 That I may do thy will in doing *mine*.

THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS:

A PASTORAL DRAMA FOR YOUNG LADIES.

—To rear the tender thought,
 To teach the young idea how to shoot,
 To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
 To breathe th' enliv'ning spirit, and to fix
 The gen'rous purpose of the female breast.—*Thomson.*

TO MRS. GWATKIN.

DEAR MADAM,—As the following poem turns chiefly on the danger of delay or error in the important article of education, I know not to whom I can, with more propriety, dedicate it than to you, as the subject it inculcates has been one of the principal objects of your attention in your own family.

Let not the name of dedication alarm you: I am not going to offend you by making your eulogium. Panegyric is only necessary to suspicious characters: Virtue will not accept it; Delicacy will not offer it.

The friendship with which you have honoured me from my childhood, will, I flatter myself, induce you to pardon me for venturing to lay before you this public testimony of my esteem, and to assure you how much I am, dear madam,

Your obedient, and obliged humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE object of the following poem, which was written in very early youth, was an earnest wish to furnish a substitute for the improper custom, which then prevailed, of allowing plays, and

those not always of the purest kind, to be acted by young ladies in boarding schools. And it has afforded a serious satisfaction to the author to learn that this little poem, and the preceding sacred dramas, have very frequently been adopted to supply the place of those more dangerous amusements. If it may be still happily instrumental in promoting a regard to Religion and Virtue in the minds of young persons, and afford them an innocent, and perhaps not altogether unuseful, amusement, in the exercise of recitation, the end for which it was originally composed, and the author's utmost wish in its republication, will be fully answered.

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY A YOUNG LADY.

In these grave scenes, and unembellish'd strains,
Where neither sly intrigue nor passion reigns;
How dare we hope an audience will approve
A drama void of wit and free from love?
Where no soft Juliet sighs, and weeps, and starts,

No fierce Roxana takes by storm your hearts;
No comic ridicule, no tragic swagger,
Not one elopement, not one bowl or dagger!
No husband wrong'd, who trusted and believ'd,
No father cheated, and no friend deceiv'd;
No libertine in glowing strains describ'd,
No lying chambermaid that rake had brib'd:
Nor give we, to reward the rover's life,
The ample portion and the beauteous wife;
Behold, to raise the manners of the age,
The frequent moral of the scenic page!
And shall we then transplant these noxious scenes

To private life? to misses in their teens?
The pompous tone, the masculine attire,
The stilts, the buskin, the dramatic fire,
Corrupt the softness of the gentler kind,
And taint the sweetness of the youthful mind.
Ungovern'd passions, jealousy and rage,
But ill become our sex, still less our age;
Whether we learn *too well* what we describe,

Or fail the poet's meaning to imbibe;
In either case your blame we justly raise,
In either lose, or ought to lose, your praise.
How dull, if tamely flows th' impassion'd strain!
If well—how bad to be the thing we feign;
To fix the mimic scene upon the heart,
And keep the passion when we quit the part!

Such are the perils the dramatic muse,
In youthful bosoms, threatens to infuse!
Our timid author labours to impart
A less pernicious lesson to the heart;
What though no charm of melody divine,
Smooth her round period, or adorn her line;
Though her unpolish'd page in vain aspires
To emulate the graces she admires:
Though destitute of skill, her sole pretence
But aims at simple truth and common sense;
Yet shall her honest unassuming page
Tell that its author, in a modish age,
Prefer'd plain virtue to the boast of art,
Nor fix'd one dangerous maxim on the heart.
O if, to crown the efforts, she could find
They rooted but one error from one mind:
If in the bosom of ingenuous youth
They stamp'd one useful thought, one lasting truth;
'Twould be a fairer tribute to her name,
Than loud applauses, or an empty fame.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

EUPHELIA, }
CLEORA, } four young ladies of distinction,
PASTORELLA, } in search of Happiness.
LAURINDA, }

URANIA, an ancient shepherdess.
SYLVIA, } her daughters.
ELIZA, }
FLORELLA, a young shepherdess.

Scene—A Grove.

EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PASTORELLA, LAURINDA.

Cle. WELCOME, ye humble vales, ye flow'ry shades,

Ye crystal fountains, and ye silent glades!
From the gay misery of the thoughtless great,
The walks of folly, the disease of state;
From scenes where daring Guilt triumphant reigns,

Its dark suspicions and its hoard of pains;
Where Pleasure never comes without alloy,
And Art but thinly paints fallacious joy;
Where Laughter loads the day, Excess the night,

And dull Satiety succeeds Delight;
Where midnight Vices their fell orgies keep,

And guilty revels scare the phantom Sleep;
Where Dissipation wears the name of Bliss;
From these we fly in search of Happiness.

Euph. Not the tir'd pilgrim all his dangers past,

When he desecrates the long sought shrine at last,
E'er felt a joy so pure as this fair field,
These peaceful shades, and smiling vallies yield!
For, sure, these oaks, which old as Time appear,
Proclaim Urania's lonely dwelling near.

Past. How the description with the scene agrees!

Here lowly thickets, there aspiring trees;
The hazel copse excluding noon-day's beam,
The tufted arbor, the pellucid stream;
The blooming sweet-briar, and the hawthorn shade,

The springing cowslips, and the daisy'd mead,
The wild luxuriance of the full blown fields,
Which Spring prepares, and laughing Summer
yields.

Euph. Here simple Nature strikes th' enrap-
tur'd eye

With charms, which wealth and art but ill sup-
ply;

The genuine graces, which *without* we find,
Display the beauty of the owner's *mind*.

Lau. These embow'ring shades conceal the
cell,

Where sage Urania and her daughters dwell:
Florella too, if right we've heard the tale,
With them resides—the lily of the vale.

Cle. But soft! what gentle female form ap-
pears,

Which smiles of more than mortal beauty
wears?

Is it the guardian Genius of the grove?
Or some fair angel of the choirs above?

Enter FLORELLA, who speaks.

Whom do I see? ye beauteous virgins say
What chance conducts your steps this lonely
way?

Do you pursue some favourite lambkin stray'd?
Or do yon alders court you to their shade?
Declare, fair strangers! if aright I deem,
No rustic nymphs of vulgar rank you seem.

Cle. No cooling shades allure our eager sight,
Nor lambkins lost, our searching steps invite.

Flo. Or is it, haply, yonder branching vine,
Whose tendrils round our low roof cottage
twine;

Whose spreading height, with purple clusters
crown'd,

Attracts the gaze of ev'ry nymph around?
Have these lone regions aught that charms be-
side?

Yours are my shades, my flow'rs, my fleecy
pride.

Euph. Florella! our united thanks receive,
Sole proof of gratitude we have to give:

And since you deign to ask, O courteous fair!
The motive of our unremitting care:

Know then, kind maid, our joint researches tend
To find that sovereign good of life, a friend;
From whom the wholesome counsel we may
gain,

How our young hearts may happiness obtain.

By Fancy's mimic pencil oft portray'd,
Still have we woo'd the visionary maid:

The lovely phantom mocks our eager eyes;
And still we chase, and still we miss the prize!

Cle. Long have we search'd throughout this
bounteous isle,

With constant ardour and with ceaseless toil;
The various ways of various life we've try'd;
But still the bliss we seek has been deny'd.
We've sought in vain through ev'ry diff'rent
state;

The murmur'ing poor, the discontented great.

If Peace and Joy in palaces reside,
Or in obscurer haunts delight to hide;

If Happiness with worldly pleasures dwell,
Or shrouds her graces in the hermit's cell:

If Wit, if Science, teach the road to bliss,
Or torpid Dulness find the joys *they* miss;

To learn this truth, we've bid a long adieu

To all the shadows blinded men pursue.

—We seek Urania; whose sagacious mind
May lead our steps this latent good to find:
Her worth we emulate; her virtues fire
Our ardent hearts to *be* what we admire:
For though with care she shuns the public eye
Yet worth like *hers*, unknown can never lie.

Lau. On such a fair and faultless mode
form'd,

By Prudence guided, and by Virtue warm'd,
Perhaps Florella can direct our youth,
And point our footsteps to the paths of Truth.

Flo. Ill would it suit my unexperienc'd age,
In such important questions to engage.

Young as I am, unskilful to discern,
Nor fit to teach, who yet have much to learn,
But would you with maturer years advise,
And reap the counsel of the truly wise,
The dame in whom such worth and wisdom
meet,

Dwells in the covert of yon green retreat:
All that the world calls great she once possess'd,
With wealth, with rank, her prosperous youth
was bless'd.

In adverse fortune, now serene and gay,
'Who gave,' she said, 'had right to take away.'
Two lovely daughters bless her growing years,
And by their virtues, well repay her cares.
With them, beneath her shel't'ring wing I live,
And share the bounties she has still to give;
For Heav'n, who in its dispensations join'd
A narrow fortune to a noble mind,
Has bless'd the sage Urania with a heart
Which Wisdom's noblest treasures can impart,
In Duty's active round each day is past,
As if she thought each day might prove her
last:

Her labours for devotion best prepare,
And meek Devotion smooths the brow of care.

Past. Then lead, Florella, to that humble shed,
Where Peace resides from court and cities fled!

SONG.

I.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care,
O hear our fond request!
Vouchsafe, reluctant Nymph to tell
On what sweet spot thou lov'st to dwell,
And make us truly blest.

II.

Amidst the walks of public life,
The toils of wealth, ambition's strife,
We long have sought in vain;
The crowded city's noisy din,
And all the busy haunts of men,
Afford but care and pain.

III.

Pleas'd with the soft, the soothing pow'r
Of calm Reflection's silent hour,
Sequester'd dost thou dwell!
Where Care and Tumult ne'er intrude,
Dost thou reside with Solitude,
Thy humble vot'ries tell!

IV.

O Happiness, celestial fair,
Our earliest hope, our latest care!
Let us not sue in vain!

O deign to hear our fond request,
Come take possession of our breast,
And there for ever reign.

[*They retire.*]

Scene—The Grove.

URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

SYLVIA (*singing.*)

I.

SWEET Solitude, thou placid queen
Of modest air and brow serene!
'Tis thou inspir'st the sage's themes;
The poet's visionary dreams.

II.

Parent of Virtue, nurse of Thought!
By thee were saints and patriarchs taught;
Wisdom from thee her treasure drew,
And in thy lap fair Science grew!

III.

Whate'er exalts, refines, and charms,
Invites to thought, to virtue wars;
Whate'er is perfect, fair, and good,
We owe to thee, sweet Solitude!

IV.

In these blest shades, O still maintain
Thy peaceful, unmolested reign!
Let no disorder'd thoughts intrude
On thy repose, sweet Solitude!

V.

With thee the charm of life shall last,
Although its rosy bloom be past;
Shall still endure when Time shall spread
His silver blossoms o'er my head.

VI.

No more with this vain world perplex'd,
Thou shalt prepare me for the next;
The springs of life shall gently cease,
And angels point the way to peace.

Ura. Ye tender objects of maternal love
Ye dearest joys my widow'd heart can prove;
Come taste the glories of the new-born day,
And grateful homage to its Author pay!
O! ever may this animating sight
Convey instruction while it sheds delight!
Does not that sun, whose cheering beams impart
Joy's glad emotions to the pure in heart;
Does not that vivid pow'r teach ev'ry mind
To be as warm, benevolent, and kind;
To burn with unremitted ardour still,
Like him to execute their Maker's will?
Then let us, Pow'r Supreme! thy will adore,
Invoke thy mercies, and proclaim thy pow'r.
Shalt thou these benefits in vain bestow?
Shall we forget the fountain whence they flow?
Teach us through these to lift our hearts to
Thee,

And in the gift the bounteous giver see.
To view Thee as thou art, all good and wise,
Nor let thy blessings hide Thee from our eyes.
From all obstructions clear our mental sight;
Pour on our souls thy beatific light!
Teach us thy wond'rous goodness to revere,
With love to worship, and with reverence fear!
In the mild works of thy benignant hand,
As in the thunder of thy dread command.
In common objects we neglect thy pow'r,
While wonders shine in every plant and flower.
—Tell me, my first, my last, my darling care,

II

If you this morn have rais'd your hearts in
pray'r?

Say did you rise from the sweet bed of rest,
Your God unprais'd, his holy name unblest?

Syl. Our hearts with gratitude and reverence
fraught,

By those pure precepts you have ever taught;
By your example more than precept strong
Of pray'r and praise have tun'd their matin song.

Eliz. With ever new delight, we now attend
The counsels of our fond maternal friend.

Enter FLORELLA, with EUPHELIA, CLEORA, PAS-
TORELLA, LAURINDA.

Flo. (*aside to the ladies*) See how the goodly
dame, with pious art,

Makes each event a lesson to the heart!
Observe the duteous list'ners how they stand:

Imp'ovement and delight go hand in hand.

Ura. But where's Florella?

Flor. Here's the happy she,
Whom Heav'n most favour'd when it gave her
thee.

Ura. But who are these, in whose attractive
mien,

So sweetly blended, ev'ry grace is seen
Speak, my Florella! say the cause why here
These beauteous damsels on our plains appear?

Flor. Invited hither by Urania's fame,
To seek her friendship, to these shades they
came.

Straying alone at morning's earliest dawn,
I met them wand'ring on the distant lawn.
Their courteous manners soon engag'd my love:
I've brought them here your sage advice to
prove.

Ura. Tell me, ye gentle nymphs! the reason
tell,

Which brings such guests to grace my lowly
cell?

My pow'r of serving, though indeed but small,
Such as it is, you may command it all.

Cle. Your counsel, your advice, is all we ask,
And for Urania that's no irksome task.

'Tis Happiness we seek: O deign to tell
Where the coy fugitive delights to dwell!

Ura. Ah, rather say where you have sought
this guest,

This lovely inmate of the virtuous breast?

Declare the various methods you've essay'd
To court and win the bright celestial maid.

But first, though harsh the task, each beauteous
fair

Her ruling passion must with truth declare,
From evil habits own'd, from faults confess'd,
Alone we trace the secrets of the breast.

Euph. Bred in the regal splendours of a court,
Where pleasures, dress'd in every shape, resort,
I try'd the pow'r of pomp and costly glare,
Nor e'er found room for thought, or time for
pray'r:

In different follies ev'ry hour I spent;

I shunn'd Reflection, yet I sought Content.

My hours were shar'd betwixt the park and play.

And music serv'd to waste the tedious day;

Yet softest airs no more with joy I heard,

If any sweeter warbler was prefer'd;

The dance succeeded, and, succeeding, tir'd,

If some more graceful dancer were admir'd.

No sounds but flatt'ry ever sooth'd my ear:

Ungentle truths I knew not how to bear.
 The anxious day induc'd the sleepless night,
 And my vex'd spirit never knew delight:
 Coy Pleasure mock'd me with delusive charms,
 Still the thin shadow fled my claspings arms:
 Or if some actual joy I seem'd to taste,
 Another's pleasure laid my blessings waste:
 One truth I prov'd, that lurking Envy hides
 In ev'ry heart where Vanity presides,
 A fairer face would rob my soul of rest,
 And fix a scorpion in my wounded breast.
 Or, if my elegance of form prevail'd
 And haply her inferior graces fail'd:
 Yet still some cause of wretchedness I found,
 Some barbed shaft my shatter'd peace to wound.
 Perhaps her gay attire exceeded mine—
 When she was finer, how could I be fine?

Syl. Pardon my interruption, beauteous maid!
 Can truth have prompted what you just have said?

What! can the poor pre-eminence of dress
 Ease the pain'd heart, or give it happiness?
 Or can you think your robes, though rich and fine,

Possess intrinsic value more than mine?

Ura. So close our nature is to vice allied,
 Our very comforts are the source of pride;
 And dress, so much corruption reigns within,
 Is both the consequence and cause of sin.

Cle. Of Happiness unfound I too complain,
 Sought in a diff'rent path, but sought in vain!
 I sigh'd for fame, I languish'd for renown,
 I would be flatter'd, prais'd, admir'd and known,
 On daring wing my mountain spirit soar'd,
 And Science through her boundless fields explor'd:

I scorn'd the salique laws of pedant schools,
 Which chain our genius down by tasteless rules,
 I long'd to burst these female bonds, which held

My sex in awe, by vanity impell'd:
 To boast each various faculty of mind,
 Thy graces, Pope! with Johnson's learning join'd:

Like Swift with strongly pointed ridicule,
 To brand the villain, and abash the fool:
 To judge with taste, with spirit to compose,
 Now mount in epic, now descend to prose;
 To join, like Burke, the beauteous and sublime,
 Or build, with Milton's art, 'the lofty rhyme.'
 Through Fancy's fields I rang'd; I strove to hit

Melmoth's chaste style, and Prior's easy wit:
 Thy classic graces, Mason, to display,
 And court the Muse of Elegy with Gray:
 I rav'd of Shakspeare's flame and Dryden's rage,
 And ev'ry charm of Otway's melting page.
 I talk'd by rote the jargon of the schools,
 Of critic laws, and Aristotle's rules;
 Of passion, sentiment, and style, and grace,
 And unities of action, time, and place.
 The daily duties of my life forgot,
 To study fiction, incident, and plot:
 How'er the conduct of my life might err,
 Still my dramatic plans were regular.

Ura. Who aims at ev'ry science, soon will find

The field how vast, how limited the mind!

Cle. Abstruser studies soon my fancy caught,
 The poet in th' astronomer forgot:

The schoolmen's systems now my mind employ'd, [Void

Their crystal Spheres, their Atoms and their
 Newton and Halley all my soul inspir'd,
 And numbers less than calculations fir'd;
 Descartes and Euclid, shar'd my varying breast,
 And plans and problems all my soul possess'd.
 Less pleas'd to sing inspiring Phoebus' ray
 Than mark the flaming comet's devious way.
 The pale moon dancing on the silver stream,
 And the mild lustre of her trembling beam,
 No more could charm my philosophic pride,
 Which sought her influence on the flowing tide.
 No more ideal beauties fir'd my thought,
 Which only facts and demonstrations sought.
 Let common eyes, I said, with transport view
 The earth's bright verdure, or the heav'n's soft blue,

False is the pleasure, the delight is vain,
 Colours exist but in the vulgar brain.

I now with Locke trod metaphysic soil,
 Now chas'd coy Nature through the tracts of Boyle;

To win the wreath of Fame, by Science twin'd,
 More than the love of science fir'd my mind.
 I seized on Learning's superficial part,
 And title page and index got by heart;
 Some learn'd authority I still would bring
 To grace my talk and prove—the plainest thing:
 This the chief transport I from science drew,
 That all might know how much Cleora knew.
 Not love, but wonder, I aspir'd to raise,
 And miss'd affection, while I grasp'd at praise.

Past. To me, no joys could pomp or fame impart,

Far softer thoughts possess'd my virgin heart.
 No prudent parent form'd my ductile youth,
 Nor led my footsteps in the paths of truth.
 Left to myself to cultivate my mind,
 Pernicious novels their soft entrance find;
 Their pois'nous influence led my mind astray;
 I sigh'd for something, what, I could not say.
 I fancy'd virtues which were never seen,
 And dy'd for heroes who have never been.
 I sicken'd with disgust at sober sense,
 And loath'd the pleasures worth and truth dispense;

I scorn'd the manners of the world I saw;
 My guide was fiction, and romance my law.
 Distemper'd thoughts my wand'ring fancy fill,
 Each wind a zephyr, and each brook a rill;
 I found adventures in each common tale,
 And talk'd and sigh'd to ev'ry passing gale;
 Convers'd with echoes, woods, and shades, and bow'rs,
 Cascades and grottos, fields and streams and flow'rs.

Retirement, more than crowds, had learn'd to please;

For treach'rous Leisure feeds the soft disease.
 There, plastic Fancy ever moulds at will
 Th' obedient image with a dang'rous skill;
 The charming fiction with alluring art,
 Awakes the passions, and infects the heart.
 A fancy'd heroine, an ideal wife;
 I loath'd the offices of real life.
 These all were dull and tame, I long'd to prove
 The gen'rous ardours of unequal love;
 Some marvel still my wayward heart must strike,

Or prince, or peasant, each had charms alike :
 Whate'er inverted nature, custom, law,
 With joy I courted, and with transport saw.
 In the dull walk of Virtue's quiet round,
 No aliment my fever'd fancy found ;
 Each duty to perform observant still
 But those which God and Nature bade me fill.

Eliza (To Urania.) O save me from the errors of deceit,

And all the dangers wealth and beauty meet.

Past. Reason perverted, Fancy on her throne,
 My soul to all my sex's softness prone ;
 I neither spoke nor look'd as mortal ought ;
 To sense abandon'd, and by Folly taught :
 A victim to Imagination's sway,
 Which stole my health, and rest, and peace away ;

Professions, void of meaning, I receiv'd,
 And still I found them false—and still believ'd :
 Imagin'd all who courted me, approv'd ;
 Who prais'd, esteem'd me ; and who flatter'd, lov'd.

Fondly I hop'd (now vain those hopes appear)
 Each man was faithful, and each maid sincere.
 Still Disappointment mock'd the ling'ring day ;
 Still new-born wishes led my soul astray.

When in the rolling year no joy I find,
 I trust the next, the next will sure be kind.
 The next fallacious as the last appears,
 And sends me on to still remoter years.
 They come, they promise—but forget to give :
 I live not, but I still intend to live.

At length, deceiv'd in all my schemes of bliss.
 I join'd these three in search of Happiness.

Eliza. Is this the world of which we want a sight ?

Are these the beings who are call'd polite ?

Sylvia. If so, oh gracious Heav'n, hear Sylvia's prayer :

Preserve me still in humble virtue here !
 Far from such baneful pleasures may I live,
 And keep, O keep me, from the taint they give !

Lou. No love of fame my torpid bosom warms,
 No Fancy soothes me, and no pleasure charms !
 Yet still remote from happiness I stray,
 No guiding star illumines my trackless way,
 My mind, nor wit misleads nor passion goads,
 But the dire rust of indolence corrodes ;
 This eating canker, with malignant stealth,
 Destroys the vital pow'rs of moral health.

Till now, I've slept on Life's tumultuous tide,
 No principle of action for my guide.

From ignorance my chief misfortunes flow ;
 I never wish'd to learn, or ear'd to know.

With ev'ry folly slow-pac'd Time beguil'd :
 In size a woman, but in soul a child.

In slothful ease my moments crept away,
 And busy trifles fill'd the tedious day ;

I liv'd extempore, as Fancy fir'd,
 As chance directed, or caprice inspir'd :

Too indolent to think, too weak to choose,
 Too soft to blame, too gentle to refuse ;

My character was stamp'd from those around :
 The figures they, my mind the simple ground.

Fashion, with monstrous forms, the canvass stain'd,

Till nothing of my genuine self remain'd ;

My pliant soul from chance receiv'd its bent,

And neither good perform'd, nor evil meant.
 From right to wrong, from vice to virtue thrown,

No character possessing of its own.

To shun fatigue I made my only law ;

Yet ev'ry night my wasted spirits saw.

No plan e'er mark'd the duties of the day,

Which stole in tasteless apathy away :

No energy inform'd my languid mind

No joy the idle e'er must hope to find.

Weak indecision, all my actions sway'd ;

The day was lost before the choice was made.

Though more to folly than to guilt inclin'd,

A drear vacuity possess'd my mind ;

Too old with infant sports to be amus'd,

Unfit for converse, and to books unus'd,

The wise avoided me, they could not hear

My senseless prattle with a patient ear.

I sought retreat, but found, with strange surprise,

Retreat is pleasant only to the wise ;

The crowded world by vacant minds is sought,
 Because it saves th' expense and pain of thought.

Disgusted, restless, ev'ry plan amiss,

I come with these in search of Happiness.

Urania. O happy they for whom, in early age,
 Enlight'ning Knowledge spreads her letter'd page !

Teaches each headstrong passion to control.

And pours her lib'ral lesson on the soul !

Ideas grow from books their nat'ral food,

As aliment is chang'd to vital blood.

Though faithless Fortune strip her vot'ry bare,

Though Malice haunt him, and though Envy tear,

Nor Time, nor Chance, nor Want, can e'er destroy

This soul-felt solace, and this bosom joy !

Clara. We thus united by one common fate,

Each discontented with her present state,

One common scheme pursue ; resolv'd to know

If Happiness can e'er be found below.

Urania. Your candour, beauteous damsels, I approve,

Your foibles pity, and your merits love.

But ere I say the methods you must try

To gain the glorious prize for which you sigh,
 Your fainting strength and spirits must be cheer'd

With a plain meal, by Temperance prepar'd.

Florella. No luxury our humble board attends,

But Love and Concord are its smiling friends.

SONG.

I.

HAIL artless Simplicity beautiful maid,
 In the genuine attractions of Nature array'd
 Let the rich and the proud, and the gay and the vain,
 Still laugh at the graces that move in thy train.

II.

No charm in thy modest allurements they find ;
 The pleasures they follow a sting leave behind
 Can criminal passion enrapture the breast
 Like Virtue, with Peace and Serenity blest ?

III.

O would you Simplicity's precepts attend,
 Like us, with delight at her altar you'd bend ;
 The pleasures she yields would with joy be embraced,
 You'd practise from virtue and love them from taste.

IV.

The linnet enchants us the bushes among;
Though cheap the musician, yet sweet is the
song;
We catch the soft warbling in air as it floats,
And with ecstacy hang on the ravishing notes.

V.

Our water is drawn from the clearest of springs,
And our food, nor disease nor satiety brings;
Our mornings are cheerful, our labours are blest,
Our ev'nings are pleasant, our nights crown'd
with rest.

VI.

From our culture yon garden its ornament
finds,
And we catch at the hint for improving our
minds;
To live to some purpose we constantly try,
And we mark by our actions the days as they
fly.

VII.

Since such are the joys that Simplicity yields,
We may well be content with our woods and
our fields:
How useless to us then, ye great, were your
wealth,
When without it we purchase both pleasure and
health!

[They retire into the cottage.

Scene—A rural entertainment.

FLORELLA, EUPHELIA, CLEORA, LAURINDA, PAS-
TORELLA.

FLORELLA (*sings*.)

I.

While Beauty and Pleasure are now in their
prime,
And Folly and Fashion expect our whole time,
Ah! let not those phantoms our wishes engage;
Let us live so in youth, that we blush not in age.

II.

Though the vain and the gay may allure us
awhile,
Yet let not their flatt'ry our prudence beguile;
Let us covet those charms that will never de-
cay,
Nor listen to all that deceivers can say.

III.

'How the tints of the rose and the jasmine's
perfume!
The eglantine's fragrance, the lilac's gay bloom,
Though fair and though fragrant, unheeded
may lie,
For that neither is sweet when Florella is by.'

IV.

I sigh not for beauty, nor languish for wealth,
But grant me, kind Providence, virtue and
health;
Then, richer than kings and as happy as they,
My days shall pass sweetly and swiftly away.

V.

When age shall steal on me, and youth is no
more,
And the moralist Time shakes his glass at my
door,
What charm in lost beauty or wealth should I
find? [mind.
My treasure, my wealth, is a sweet peace of

VI.

That peace I'll preserve then, as pure as was
giv'n,
And taste in my bosom an earnest of Heav'n;
Thus virtue and wisdom can warm the cold
scene,
And sixty may flourish as gay as sixteen.

VII.

And when long I the burden of life shall have
borne, [corn,
And Death with his sickle shall cut the ripe
Resign'd to my fate, without murmur or sigh,
I'll bless the kind summons, and lie down and
die.

Euphe. Thus sweetly pass the hours of rural
ease!

Here life is bliss, and pleasures truly please!

Past. With joy we view the dangers we have
past,

Assur'd we've found felicity at last.

Flor. Esteem none happy by their outward
air;

All have their portion of allotted care.
Though wisdom wears the semblance of content,
When the full heart with agony is rent,
Secludes its anguish from the public view,
And by secluding learns to conquer too:
Denied the fond indulgence to complain,
The aching heart its peace may best regain.
By love directed, and in mercy meant,
Are trials suffer'd and afflictions sent;
To stem impetuous Passion's furious tide,
To curb the insolence of prosp'rous Pride,
To wean from earth, and bid our wishes soar
To that blest clime where pain shall be no more;
Where wearied Virtue shall for refuge fly,
And ev'ry tear be wip'd from ev'ry eye.

Cleora. List'ning to you, my heart can never
cease

To reverence Virtue, and to sigh for peace.

Flor. Know, e'en Urania, that accomplish'd
fair [care,

Whose goodness makes her Heaven's peculiar
Though born to all that affluence can bestow,
Has felt the deep reverse of human woe:
Yet meek in grief, and patient in distress,
She knew the hand that wounds has pow'r to
bless.

Grateful she bows, for what is left her still,
To HIM whose love dispenses good and ill;
To HIM who, while his bounty thousands fed,
Had not himself a place to lay his head;
To HIM who that he might our wealth insure,
Though rich himself consented to be poor.
Taught by his precepts, by his practice taught,
Her will submitted, and resigned her thought,
Through faith, she looks beyond this dark abode,
To scenes of glory near the throne of God

Enter URANIA, SYLVIA, ELIZA.

Ura. Since gentle nymphs! my friendship to
obtain,
You've sought with eager step this peaceful
plain,
My honest counsel with attention hear,
Though plain, well meant, imperfect, yet sin-
cere;
What from maturer years alone I've known,

What time has taught me, and experience shown,

No polish'd phrase my artless speech will grace,
But unaffected Candour fill its place :

My lips shall flatt'ry's smooth deceit refuse,
And truth be all the eloquence I'll use.

Know then, that life's chief happiness and wo,
From good or evil education flow ;

And hence our future dispositions rise ;
The vice we practice, or the good we prize.

When pliant Nature any form receives,
That precept teaches or example gives,

The yielding mind with virtue should be grac'd,
For first impressions seldom are effac'd.

Then holy habits, then chastis'd desires,
Should regulate disorder'd Nature's fires.

If Ignorance then, her iron sway maintain,
If prejudice preside, or Passion reign,

If Vanity preserve her native sway,
If selfish tempers cloud the op'ning day,

If no kind hand impetuous Pride restrain,
But for the wholesome curb we give the rein ;

The erring principle is rooted fast,
And fix'd the habit that through life may last.

Past. With heartfelt penitence we now deplore

Those squander'd hours, that time can ne'er restore.

Ura. Euphelia sighs for flatt'ry, dress, and show :

The common sources these of female wo !

In Beauty's sphere pre-eminence to find,
She slights the culture of th' immortal mind :

I would not rail at Beauty's charming pow'r,
I would but have her aim at something more ;

The fairest symmetry of form or face,
From intellect receives its highest grace ;

The brightest eyes ne'er dart such piercing fires,

As when a soul irradiates and inspires :

Beauty with reason needs not quite dispense,
And coral lips may sure speak common sense :

Beauty makes Virtue lovelier still appear ;
Virtue makes Beauty more divinely fair !

Confirms its conquests o'er the willing mind,
And those your beauties gain, your virtues bind.

Yet would ambition's fire your bosom fill,
Its flame repress not—be ambitious still ;

Let nobler views your best attention claim,
The object chang'd, the energy the same :

Those very passions which our heart invade,
If rightly pointed, blessings may be made.

Indulge the true ambition to excel

In that best art—the art of living well.

But first extirpate from your youthful breast

That rankling torment which destroys your rest :

All other faults may take a higher aim,

But hopeless Envy must be still the same.

Some other passions may be turn'd to good,

But Envy must subdue, or be subdu'd.

This fatal gangrene to our moral life,

Rejects all palliatives, and asks the knife ;

Excision spar'd, it taints the vital part,

And spreads its deadly venom to the heart.

Uph. Unhappy those to bliss who seek the way,

In pow'r superior, or in splendour gay !

Inform'd by thee, no more vain man shall find

The charm of flatt'ry taint Euphelia's mind :

By thee instructed still my views shall rise,
Nor stop at any mark beneath the skies.

Urania. In fair Laurinda's uninstructed mind,
The want of culture, not of sense, we find ;
Whence'er you sought the good, or shunn'd the ill,

'Twas more from temper than from principle :
Your random life to no just rules reduc'd,

'Twas chance the virtue or the vice produc'd :
The casual goodness *Impulse* has to boast,

Like morning dews, or transient show'rs is lost ;
While Heav'n-taught Virtue pours her constant tide,

Like streams by living fountains still supply'd.

Be wisdom still, though late, your earnest care,
Nor waste the precious hours in vain despair :

Associate with the good, attend the sage,
And meekly listen to experience'd age.

What, if acquisitions you have fail'd to gain,
Such as the wise may want the bad attain

Yet still religion's sacred treasures lie

Inviting, open, plain to ev'ry eye ;

For ev'ry age, for ev'ry genius fit,

Nor limited to science nor to wit ;

Not bound by taste, to genius not confin'd,

But all may learn the truth for all design'd.

Though low the talents, and th' acquisitions small,

The gift of grace divine is free to all ;

She calls, solicits, courts you to be blest,

And points to mansions of eternal rest.

And when, advanc'd in years, matur'd in sense,

Think not with farther care you may dispense,
'Tis fatal to the int'rests of the soul

To stop the race before we've reach'd the goal ;
For nought our higher progress can preclude

So much as thinking we're already good.

The human heart ne'er knows a state of rest :

Bad leads to worse, and better tends to best.

We either gain or lose, we sink or rise,

Nor rests our struggling Nature till she dies :

Then place the standard of perfection high ;

Pursue and grasp it, e'en beyond the sky.

Lau. O that important Time could back return [mourn !

Those misspent hours whose loss I deeply
Accept, just Heav'n, my penitence sincere,

My heartfelt anguish, and my fervent pray'r !

Ura. I pity Pastorella's hapless fate,

By nature gentle, gen'rous, mild, and great ;

One false propensity all her pow'rs confin'd,

And chain'd her finer faculties of mind ;

Yet ev'ry virtue might have flourish'd there,

With early culture and maternal care.

If good we plant not, vice will fill the place,
And rankest weeds the richest soils deface.

Learn, how ungovern'd thoughts the mind pervert,

And to disease all nourishment convert.

Ah ! happy she, whose wisdom learns to find

A healthful fancy and a well train'd mind !

A sick man's wildest dreams less wild are found,

Than the day-visions of a mind unsound.

Disorder'd phantasies indulg'd too much,

Like harpies, always taint whate'er they touch.

Fly soothing Solitude ! fly vain Desire !

Fly such soft verse as fans the dang'rous fire !

Seek action ; 'tis the scene which Virtue loves ;

The vig'rous sun not only shines, but moves.

From sickly thoughts with quick abhorrence
start,

And rule the fancy if you'd rule the heart :
By active goodness, by laborious schemes,
Subdue wild visions, and delusive dreams.
No earthly good a Christian's views should
bound,

For ever rising should his aims be found.
Leave that fictitious good your fancy feigns
For scenes where real bliss eternal reigns :
Look to that region of immortal joys,
Where fear disturbs not, nor possession cloy's ;
Beyond what Fancy forms of rosy bow'rs,
Or blooming chaplets of unfading flow'rs ;
Fairer than e'er imagination drew,
Or poet's warmest visions ever knew.
Press eager onward to those blissful plains
Where life eternal, joy perpetual reigns.

Past. I mourn the errors of my thoughtless
youth,

And long, with thee, to tread the paths of truth.

Ura. Learning is all the bright Cleora's aim ;
She seeks the loftiest pinnacle of fame ;
On interdicted ground presumes to stand,
And grasps at Science with a vent'rous hand :
The privilege of man she dares invade,
And tears the chaplet from his laurel'd head.
Why found her merit on a foreign claim ?
Why lose a substance to acquire a name ?

Let the proud sex possess their vaunted pow'rs :
Be other triumphs, other glories ours !

The gentler charms which wait on female life,
Which grace the daughter and adorn the wife,
Be these our boast ; yet these may well admit
Of various knowledge, and of blameless wit :
Of sense, resulting from a nurtur'd mind,
Of polish'd converse, and of taste refin'd :
Of that quick intuition of the best,
Which feels the graceful, and rejects the rest :
Which finds the right by shorter ways than
rules

An art which Nature teaches—not the schools.
Thus conq'ring Sevigne the heart obtains,
While Dacier only admiration gains.

Know, fair aspirer, could you even hope,
To speak like Stonehouse, or to write like Pope,
To all the wonders of the poet's lyre,
Join all that taste can add, or wit inspire.
With every various pow'r of learning fraught ;
The flow of style and the sublime of thought ;
Yet, if the milder graces of the mind,
Graces peculiar to the sex design'd,
Good nature, patience, sweetness void of art ;
If these embellish not your virgin heart,
You might be dazzling, but not truly bright ;
Might glare, but not emit an useful light ;
A meteor, not a star, you would appear ;
For woman shines but in her proper sphere.

Accomplishments by Heav'n were sure de-
sign'd

Less to adorn than to amend the mind :
Each should contribute to this gen'ral end,
And all to virtue, as their centre, tend.
Th' acquirements, which our best esteem invite,
Should not project, but soften, mix, unite :
In glaring light not strongly be display'd,
But sweetly lost, and melted into shade.

Cleora. Confus'd with shame, to thy reproofs
I bend,
Thou best adviser, and thou truest friend !

From thee I'll learn to judge and act aright,
Humility with Knowledge to unite :
The finish'd character must both combine,
The perfect woman must in either shine.

Ura. Florella shines adorn'd with every grace,
Her heart all virtue, as all charms her face :
Above the wretched, and below the great,
Kind Heav'n has fix'd her in a middle state ;
The daemon Fashion never warped her soul,
Her passions move at Piety's control ;
Her eyes the movements of her heart declare,
For what she dares to be, she dares appear ;
Unlectur'd in Dissimulation's school,
To smile by precept, and to blush by rule :
Her thoughts ingenuous, ever open lie,
Nor shrink from close Inspection's keenest eye,
No dark disguise about her heart is thrown ;
'Tis Virtue's int'rest fully to be known ;
Her nat'ral sweetness ev'ry heart obtains ;
What Art and Affectation miss, she gains.
She smoothes the path of my declining years,
Augments my comforts, and divides my cares.

Past. O sacred Friendship ! O exalted state !
The choicest bounty of indulgent fate !

Ura. Let woman then her real good discern,
And her true int'rests of Urania learn :
As some fair violet, loveliest of the glade,
Sheds its mild fragrance on the lonely shade,
Withdraws its modest head from public sight,
Nor courts the sun, nor seeks the glare of light ;
Should some rude hand profanely dare intrude,
And bear its beauties from its native wood,
Expos'd abroad its languid colours fly,
Its form decays, and all its odours die
So woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great,
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm,
Fearful of Fame, unwilling to be known,
Should seek but Heaven's applauses and her
own ;

Hers be the task to seek the lonely cell
Where modest Want and silent Anguish dwell ;
Raise the weak head, sustain the feeble knees,
Cheer the cold heart, and chase the dire disease.
The splendid deeds, which only seek a name,
Are paid their just reward in present fame ;
But know, the awful all-disclosing day,
The long arrear of secret worth shall pay ;
Applauding saints shall hear with fond regard.
And He, who witness'd here, shall there reward.

Euph. With added grace she pleads Reli-
gion's cause,

Who from her life her virtuous lesson draws.

Ura. In vain, ye fair ! from place to place you
roam,

For that true peace which must be found at
home :

No change of fortune, nor of scene can give
The bliss you seek, which in the soul must live.
Then look no more abroad ; in your own breast
Seek the true seat of happiness and rest.
Nor small, my friends ! the vigilance I ask,
Watch well yourselves, this is the Christian's
task.

The cherish'd sin by each must be assail'd,
New efforts added, where the past have fail'd :
The darling error check'd, the will subdu'd,
The heart by penitence and pray'r renew'd.
Nor hope for perfect happiness below :

Celestial plants on earth reluctant grow.
He who our frail mortality did bear,
Though free from sin, was not exempt from
care.

Cleora. Let's join to bless that Pow'r who
brought us here,
Adore his goodness, and his will revere ;
Assur'd, that Peace exists but in the mind,
And Piety alone that Peace can find.

Ura. In its true light this transient life re-
gard :

This is a state of trial, not reward.
Though rough the passage, peaceful is the port,
The bliss is perfect, the probation short.
Of human wit beware the fatal pride ;
An useful follower, but a dang'rous guide :
On holy Faith's aspiring pinnions rise ;
Assert your birth-right, and assume the skies.

Fountain of Being ! teach us to devote
To Thee each purpose, action, word and thought !
Thy grace our hope, thy love our only boast,
Be all distinctions in the Christian lost !
Be this in ev'ry state our wish alone,
Almighty, Wise and Good, Thy will be done !

ODE TO CHARITY.

TO BE PERFORMED BY THE CHARACTERS OF THE
PIECE.

I.

O CHARITY, divinely wise,
Thou meek-ey'd daughter of the skies !
From the pure fountain of eternal light,
Where fair, immutable, and ever bright,

The beatific vision shines,
Where angel with archangel join
In choral songs to sing His praise,
Parent of Life, Ancient of Days,
Who was ere Time existed, and shall be
Through the wide round of vast Eternity ;
Oh come, thy warm celestial beams impart,
Enlarge my feelings, and expand my heart !

II.

Descend from radiant realms above,
Thou effluence of that boundless love
Whence joy and peace in streams unsully'd
flow,
Oh deign to make thy lov'd abode below !
Though sweeter strains adorn'd my tongue
Than saint conceiv'd or seraph sung,
And though my glowing fancy caught
Whatever Art or Nature taught,
Yet if this hard unfeeling heart of mine
Ne'er felt thy force, O Charity divine !
An empty shadow Science would be found
My knowledge ignorance, my wit a sound !

III.

Though my prophetic spirit knew
To bring futurity to view,
Without thy aid e'en this would not avail,
For tongues shall cease and prophecies shall fail.
Come then, thou sweet immortal guest,
Shed thy soft influence o'er my breast,
Bring with thee Faith, divinely bright,
And Hope, fair Harbinger of light,
To clear each mist with their pervading ray,
To fit my soul for Heav'n, and point the way ;
There Perfect Happiness her sway maintains,
For there the God of Peace for ever reigns.

TRAGEDIES.

PREFACE TO THE TRAGEDIES.

I AM desirous to anticipate a censure which the critical reader will be ready to bring forward, on the apparent inconsistency between the contents of the latter part of this volume, composed of dramatic pieces, and several sentiments not unfrequently introduced in some of my writings, respecting the dangerous tendency of certain public amusements, in which dramatic entertainments will be naturally included. The candid reader will be able to solve the paradox when it is intimated at what different periods of life these different pieces were written. The dates, if they were regularly preserved, would explain that the seeming disagreement does not involve a contradiction, as it proceeds not from an inconsistency, but from a revolution in the sentiments of the author.

From my youthful course of reading, and early habits of society and conversation, aided, perhaps, by that natural but secret bias which the inclination gives to the judgment, I had been led to entertain that common, but, as I must now think, delusive and groundless hope, that the stage, under certain regulations, might be converted into a school of virtue; and thus, like many others, inferred, by a seemingly reasonable conclusion, that though a bad play would always be a bad thing, yet the representation of a good one might become not only harmless, but useful; and that it required nothing more than a correct judgment and a critical selection, to transform a pernicious pleasure into a profitable entertainment.

On these grounds (while, perhaps, as was intimated above, it was nothing more than the indulgence of a propensity), I was led to flatter myself it might be rendering that inferior service to society which the fabricator of safe and innocent amusements may reasonably be supposed to confer, to attempt some theatrical compositions, which, whatever other defects might be justly imputable to them, should at least be found to have been written on the side of virtue and modesty; and which should neither hold out any corrupt image to the mind, nor any impure description to the fancy.

As the following pieces were written and performed at an early period of my life, under the above impressions, I feel it a kind of duty (imploping pardon for the unavoidable egotism to which it leads), not to send them afresh into the world in this collection, without prefixing to them a candid declaration of my altered view. In so doing, I am fully aware that I equally subject myself to the opposite censures of two different classes of readers, one of which will think that the best evidence of my sincerity would have been the suppression of the tragedies themselves, while the other will reprobate the change of sentiment which gives birth to the qualifying preface.

I should, perhaps, have been inclined to adopt the first of these two opinions, had it not occurred to me that the suppression would be thought disingenuous; and had I not been also desirous of grounding on the publication, though in a very cursory manner, my sentiments on the general tendency of the drama; for it appeared but fair and candid to include in this view my own compositions; and thus, in some measure, though without adverting to them, to involve myself in the general object of my own animadversions.

I am not, even now, about to controvert the assertion of some of the ablest critics, that a well-written tragedy is, perhaps, one of the noblest efforts of the human mind—I am not, even now, about to deny, that of all public amusements it is the most interesting, the most intellectual, and the most accommodated to the tastes and capacities of a rational being; nay, that it is almost the only one which has *mind* for its object; which has the combined advantage of addressing itself to the imagination, the judgment, and the heart; that it is the only public diversion which calls out the higher energies of the understanding in the composition, and awakens the most lively and natural feelings of the heart in the representation.

With all this decided superiority in point of mental pleasure which the stage possesses over every other species of public entertainment, it is not to be wondered at that its admirers and advocates, even the most respectable, should cherish a hope, that, under certain restrictions, and under an improved form, it might be made to contribute to instruction as well as to pleasure; and it is on this plausible ground that we have heard so many ingenious defences of this species of amusement.

What the stage might be under another and an imaginary state of things, it is not very easy for us to know, and therefore not very important to inquire. Nor is it, indeed, the soundest logic

to argue on the possible goodness of a thing, which, in the present circumstances of society, is doing positive evil, from the imagined good that thing might be conjectured to produce in a supposed state of unattainable improvement. Would it not be more safe and simple to determine our judgment as to the character of the thing in question, on the more visible, and therefore more rational grounds, of its actual state, and from the effects which it is known to produce in that state?

For, unfortunately, this Utopian good cannot be produced, until not only the stage itself has undergone a complete purification, but until the audience shall be purified also. For we must first suppose a state of society in which the spectators will be disposed to relish all that is pure, and to reprobate all that is corrupt, before the system of a pure and uncorrupt theatre can be adopted with any reasonable hope of success. There must always be a congruity between the taste of the spectator and the nature of the spectacle, in order to effect that point of union which can produce pleasure: for it must be remembered that people go to a play, not to be *instructed*, but to be *pleased*. As we do not send the blind to an exhibition of pictures, nor the deaf to a concert, so it would be leaving the projected plan of a pure stage in a state of imperfection, unless the general corruption of human nature itself were so reformed as to render the amusements of a perfectly purified stage palatable. If the sentiments and passions exhibited were no longer accommodated to the sentiments and passions of the audience, corrupt nature would soon withdraw itself from the rapid and inappropriate amusement; and *then*, I will not say *empty* benches, would too probably be the reward of the conscientious reformer.

Far be it from me to wish to restore that obsolete rubbish of ignorance and folly with which the monkish legends furnished out the rude materials of our early drama: I mean those uncouth pieces, in which, under the titles of *mysteries* and *moralties*, the most sacred persons were introduced as interlocutors; in which events too solemn for exhibition, and subjects too awful for detail, were brought before the audience with a formal gravity more offensive than levity itself. The superstitions of the cloister were considered as suitable topics for the diversions of the stage; and celestial intelligences, uttering the sentiments and language, and blended with the buffoneries, of Bartholomew fair, were regarded as appropriate subjects of merrymaking for a holiday audience. But from this holy mummerly, at which piety, taste, and common sense, would be equally revolted, I return to the existing state of things.*

I have never paused any of those treatises, excellent as some of them are said to be, which pious divines have written against the pernicious tendency of theatrical entertainments. The convictions of my mind have arisen solely from experience and observation. I shall not, therefore, go over the well-trodden ground of those who have inveighed, with too much justice, against the immoral lives of too many stage professors, allowing always for some very honourable exceptions. I shall not remark on the gross and palpable corruptions of those plays which are obviously written with an open disregard to all purity and virtue: nor shall I attempt to show whether any very material advantage would arise to the vain and the dissipated, were they to exclude the theatre from its turn in their indiscriminated round of promiscuous pleasure. But I would coolly and respectfully address a few words to those many worthy and conscientious persons, who would not, perhaps, so early and incautiously expose their youthful offspring to the temptations of an amusement of which they themselves could be brought to see and to feel the existence.

The question, then, which with great deference I would propose, is not whether those who risk every thing may not risk this also; but whether the more correct and considerate Christian might not find it worth while to consider if the amusement in question be entirely compatible with his avowed character? whether it be entirely consistent with the clearer views of one who professes to live in the sure and certain hope of that immortality which is brought to light by the gospel?

For, however weighty the arguments in favour of the superior *rationality* of plays may be found in the scale, when a rational being puts one amusement in the balance against another; however fairly he may exalt the stage against other diversions, as being more adapted to a man of sense; yet this, perhaps, will not quite vindicate it in the opinion of the more scrupulous Christian, who will not allow himself to think that of two evils *either* may be chosen. *His* amusements must be blameless, as well as ingenious; safe, as well as rational; moral, as well as intellectual. They must have nothing in them which may be likely to excite any of the tempers which it is his daily task to subdue; any of the passions which it is his constant business to keep in order. *His* chosen amusements must not deliberately add to the "weight" which he is commanded "to lay aside;" they should not irritate the "besetting sin" against which he is struggling; they should not obstruct that "spiritual mindedness" which he is told "is life and peace;" they should not inflame that "lust of the flesh, that lust of the eye, and that pride of life," which he is forbidden to gratify. A religious person who occasionally indulges in an amusement not consonant to his general views and pursuits, inconceivably increases his own difficulties by whet-

* An enthusiast to the literature of my own country, and so jealous of its fame as grudgingly to allow its comparative inferiority in any one instance, I am yet compelled to acknowledge, that, as far as my slender reading enables me to form a judgment, the English dramatic poets are in general more licentious than those of most other countries. In that profligate reign,

"When all the Muses were debauched at court,"

the stage attained its highest degree of dissoluteness. Mr. Garrick did a great deal towards its purification. It is said not to have since kept the ground it then gained.

ting tastes and exciting appetites, which it will cut him out so much work to counteract, as will greatly overbalance, in a conscientious mind, the short and trivial enjoyment. I speak now on the mere question of pleasure. Nay, the more keen his relish for the amusement, the more exquisite his discernment of the beauties of composition or the graces of action may be, the more prudent he may perhaps find it to deny himself the gratification which is enjoyed at the slightest hazard of his higher interests; a gratification which to him will be the more dangerous, in proportion as it is more poignantly felt.

A Christian, in our days, is seldom called, in his ordinary course, to great and signal sacrifices, to very striking and very ostensible renunciations; but he is daily called to a quiet, uniform, constant series of self-denial in small things. A dangerous and bewitching, especially if it be not a disreputable pleasure, may perhaps have a just place among those sacrifices: and, if he be really in earnest, he will not think it too much to renounce such petty enjoyments, were it only from the single consideration that it is well to seize every little occasion which occurs of evidencing to himself that he is constantly on the watch; and of proving to the world, that in small things, as well as in great, he is a follower of Him who "pleased not himself."

Little, unobserved, and unostentatious abstinences, are among the silent deeds of his daily warfare. And whoever brings himself to exercise this habitual self-denial, even in doubtful cases, will soon learn, from happy experience, that in many instances abstinence is much more easily practised than temperance. There is in this case no excited sensibility to allay; there is no occasional remorse to be quieted; there is no lost ground to be recovered; no difficult backing out, only to get again to the same place where we were before. This observation adopted into practice might, it is presumed, effectually abolish the qualifying language of many of the more *sober* frequenters of the theatre, "that they go but *seldom*, and never but to a *good* play." We give these moderate and discreet persons all due praise for comparative sobriety. But while they go *at all*, the principle is the same; for they sanction, by going sometimes, a diversion which is not to be defended on strict Christian principles. Indeed, their acknowledging that it should be but sparingly frequented, probably arises from a conviction that it is not *quite* right.

I have already remarked that it is not the object of this address to pursue the usual track of attacking bad plays, of which the more prudent and virtuous seldom vindicate the principle, though they do not always scrupulously avoid attending the exhibition. I impose rather on myself the unpopular task of animadverting on the dangerous effects of those which come under the description of good plays; for from those chiefly arises the danger (if danger there be), to good people.

Now, with all the allowed superiority justly ascribed to pieces of a better cast, it does not seem to be a complete justification of the amusement, that the play in question is more chaste in the sentiment, more pure in the expression, and more moral in the tendency, than those which are avowedly objectionable; though I readily concede all the degrees of distinction, and very important they are, between such compositions and those of the opposite character. But the point for which I am contending is of another and of a distinct nature; namely, that there will, generally speaking, still remain, even in tragedies, otherwise the most unexceptionable, provided they are sufficiently impassioned to produce a powerful effect on the feelings, and have spirit enough to deserve to become popular; there will still remain an essential radical defect. What I insist on is, that there almost inevitably runs through the whole web of the tragic drama (for to this least blameable half of stage composition I confine my remarks, as against comedy still stronger objections may be urged), a prominent thread of false principle. It is generally the leading object of the poet to erect a standard of honour in direct opposition to the standard of Christianity; and this is not done subordinately, incidentally, occasionally; but worldly honour is the very soul, and spirit, and lifegiving principle of the drama. Honour is the religion of tragedy. It is her moral and political law. Her dictates form its institutes. Fear and shame are the capital crimes in her code. Against these, all the eloquence of her most powerful pleaders, against these her penal statutes, pistol, sword, and poison, are in full force. Injured honour can only be vindicated at the point of the sword; the stains of injured reputation can only be washed out in blood. Love, jealousy, hatred, ambition, pride, revenge, are too often elevated into the rank of splendid virtues, and form a dazzling system of worldly morality, in direct contradiction to the spirit of that religion whose characteristics are "charity, meekness, peaceableness, longsuffering, gentleness, forgiveness." "The fruits of the Spirit" and the fruits of the stage, if the parallel were followed up, as it might easily be, would perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as human imagination could conceive.

I by no means pretend to assert that religion is excluded from tragedies; it is often incidentally introduced; and many a period is beautifully turned, and many a moral is exquisitely pointed, with the finest sentiments of piety. But the single grains of this counteracting principle, scattered up and down the piece, do not extend their antiseptic property in a sufficient degree to preserve from corruption the body of a work, the general spirit and leading tempers of which, as was said above, are evidently not drawn from that meek religion, the very essence of which consists in "casting down high imaginations:" while, on the other hand, the leaven of the predominating evil secretly works and insinuates itself, till the whole mass becomes impregnated by the pervading principle. Now, if the directing principle be unsound, the virtues growing out of it will be unsound also; and no subordinate merit, no collateral excellences, can operate with effectual potency against

an evil which is of prime and fundamental force and energy, and which forms the very essence of the work.

A learned and witty friend, who thought differently on this subject, once asked me if I went so far as to think it necessary to try the merit of a song or a play by the ten commandments. To this may we not venture to answer, that neither a song nor a play should at least contain any thing hostile to the ten commandments. That, if harmless merriment be not expected to advance religion, we must take care that it do not oppose it; that if we concede that our amusements are not expected to make us better than we are, ought we not to condition that they do not make us worse than they find us? If so, then, whatever pleasantry of idea, whatever gayety of sentiment, whatever airiness of expression we innocently admit, should we not jealously watch against any unsoundness in the general principle, any mischief in the prevailing tendency?

We cannot be too often reminded, that we are, to an inconceivable degree, the creatures of habit. Our tempers are not principally governed, nor our characters formed, by single marked actions; nor is the colour of our lives often determined by prominent, detached circumstances; but the character is gradually moulded by a series of seemingly insignificant but constantly recurring practices, which, incorporated into our habits, become part of ourselves.

Now, as these lesser habits, if they take a wrong direction, silently and imperceptibly eat out the very heart and life of vigorous virtue, they will be almost more sedulously watched by those who are careful to keep their consciences tenderly alive to the perception of sin (however they may elude the attention of ordinary Christians), than actions which deter by bold and decided evil.

When it is recollected how many young men pick up their habits of thinking, and their notions of morality, from the playhouse, it is not perhaps going too far to suspect, that the principles and examples exhibited on the stage may contribute in their full measure and proportion towards supplying a sort of regular aliment to the appetite (how dreadfully increased!) for duelling, and even suicide. For, if religion teaches, and experience proves, the immense importance to our tempers and morals of a regular attendance on public worship, which attendance is only required of us one day in a week; and if it be considered how much the heart and mind of the attentive hearer become gradually imbued with the principles infused by this stated, though unfrequent attendance; who, that knows any thing of the nature of the human heart, will deny how much more deep and lasting will be the impression likely to be made by a far more frequent attendance at those places where sentiments of a direct contrary tendency are exhibited; exhibited too, with every addition which can charm the imagination and captivate the senses. Once in a week, it may be, the young minds are braced by the invigorating principles of a strict and self-denying religion: on the intermediate nights, their good resolutions (if such they have made), are melted down with all that can relax the soul, and dispose it to yield to the temptations against which it was the object of the Sunday's lecture to guard and fortify it. In the one case, there is every thing held out which can inflame or sooth corrupt nature, in opposition to those precepts which, in the other case, were directed to subdue it. And this one grand and important difference between the two cases should never be overlooked, that religious instruction, applied to the human heart, is seed sown in an uncultivated soil, where much is to be cleared, to be broken up, and to be rooted out, before good fruit will be produced: whereas the theatrical seed, by lighting on the fertile soil prepared by nature for the congenial implantation, is likely to shoot deep, spread wide, and bring forth fruit in abundance.

But, to drop all metaphor.—They are told—and from whose mouth do they hear it?—that “blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, and the peacemakers.” Will not these, and such like humbling propositions, delivered one day in seven only, in all the sober and beautiful simplicity of our church, with all the force of truth indeed, but with all its plainness also, be more than counterbalanced by the speedy and much more frequent recurrence of the nightly exhibition, whose precise object it too often is, not only to preach, but to personify doctrines in diametrical and studied opposition to poverty of spirit, to purity, to meekness, forbearance, and forgiveness? Doctrines, not simply expressed, as those of the Sunday are, in the naked form of axioms, principles, and precepts, but realized, embodied, made alive, furnished with organs, clothed, decorated, brought into lively discourse, into interesting action; enforced with all the energy of passion, adorned with all the graces of language, and exhibited with every aid of emphatical delivery, every attraction of appropriate gesture. To such a complicated temptation is it wise, voluntarily, studiously, unnecessarily, to expose frail and erring creatures? Is not the conflict too severe? Is not the competition too unequal?

It is pleaded by the advocates for church music, that the organ and its vocal accompaniments assist devotion, by enlisting the senses on the side of religion; and it is justly pleaded as an argument in favour of both, because the affections may fairly and properly derive every honest aid from any thing which helps to draw them off from the world to God. But is it not equally true, that the same species of assistance, in a wrong direction, will produce an equally forcible effect in its way, and at least equally contribute in drawing off the soul from God to the world? I do not presume to say that the injury will be inevitable, much less that it will be irretrievable; but I dare repeat, that it is exposing feeble virtue to a powerful temptation; and to a hazard so great, that were the same reason applied to any worldly subject, it would be thought a folly to venture on any undertaking where the chances against our coming off unhurt were so obviously against us. Besides, if we may pursue the doctrine of chances a little farther, that is at best

playing a most unprofitable game, where, if we even could be sure that nothing would be lost, it is clear to demonstration that nothing *can* be gained; so that the certain risk is not even counterbalanced by the possible success.

It is not in point to the present design to allude to the multitude of theatrical sentiments which seem to be written as if in avowed opposition to such precepts as "Swear not at all:" "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart," &c. &c. We are willing to allow that this last offence, at least, is generally, I would it were invariably, confined to those more incorrect dramas which we do not now profess to consider. Yet it is to be feared we should not find many pieces (are we sure we can find one!) entirely exempt from the first heavy charge. And it is, perhaps, one of the most invincible objections to many tragedies, otherwise not very exceptionable, that the awful and tremendous name of the infinitely glorious God is shamefully, and almost incessantly, introduced in various scenes, both in the way of asseveration and of invocation.

Besides, the terms *good* and *bad* play are relative; for we are so little exact in our general definitions, that the character given to the piece often takes its colour from the character of him who gives it. Passages which to the decent moral man (him, I mean, who is decent and moral on mere worldly principles) are to the "purged eye" of a Christian disgusting by their vanity, and offensive by their levity, to speak in the gentlest terms.

But more especially the prime animating spirit of many of our more decorous dramas seems to furnish a strong contrast to the improved and enlarged comment of our Saviour in the New Testament, on the divine prohibition against murder in the Old, in the wo denounced against anger, as containing in itself the seed and principle of murder; anger, and its too usual concomitant, revenge, being the main spring on which some of our best tragedies turn.

The eloquent apologies, and the elaborate vindication of the crimes resulting from the point of honour and the dread of shame, and with such apologies and vindications some of our most approved pieces abound, too temptingly invite the high unbroken spirit of a warm youth, from admiring such sentiments to adopt them; and he is liable to be stimulated first to the commission of the crime, and, after he has committed it, to the hope of having his reputation cleared, by the perpetual eulogies these flattering scenes bestow on rash and intemperate bravery; on the *dignity* of that spirit which cannot brook an insult; and on that *generous* sense of wounded honour which is ever on the watch to revenge itself. And when he hears the bursts of applause with which these sallies of resentment, these vows of revenge, these determinations to destroy or be destroyed, this solemn obtesting the great Judge of hearts to witness the innocence of—perhaps a very criminal action or intention;—when, I say, a hoththeaded young man witnesses the enthusiasm of admiration which such expressions excite in a transported audience, will it not operate as a kind of stimulus to him to adopt a similar conduct, should he ever be placed in similar circumstances? and will it not furnish him with a sort of criterion how such maxims would be received, and such conduct approved, in real life? For the danger does not lie merely in his hearing such sentiments delivered from the stage, but also in seeing how favourably they are received by the audience; received, too, by those persons who, should he realize these sentiments, would probably be the arbiters of his conduct. These are to him a kind of anticipated jury. The scene is, as it were, the rehearsal of an acquittal at the bar of that world whose tribunal is, perhaps, unhappily for him, considered as his last appeal; for it is not probably hazardous too much to conclude, that by the sort of character we are considering, human opinion will be looked upon as the highest motive of action, human praise as the highest reward, and human censure as an evil to be deprecated, even by the loss of his soul.

If one of the most virtuous of poets and of men, by the cool, deliberate, argumentative manner in which he makes his Roman hero destroy himself; this hero, too, a pagan, consistently illustrating by this action an historical fact, and acting in a natural conformity to his own stoical principles;—if, I say, under all these palliating circumstances, the ingenious sophistry by which the poet was driven to mitigate the crime of suicide, in order to accommodate the sentiment to the real character of his hero;—if this Christian poet, even to his own private friend and literary associate, could appear, by the specious reasoning of his famous soliloquy, to vindicate self-murder, so that the unhappy Budgell exclaimed, when falling by his own hand,

"What Cato did, and Addison approv'd,
Must sure be right:—"

If, I say, under all the extenuating circumstances here detailed, such a dreadful effect could be produced from a cause so little expected or intended by its author to produce it, how much more probably are similar ill consequences likely to arise from similar causes in the hands of a poet less guarded and worse principled; and whose heroes have, perhaps, neither the apology of acknowledged paganism, nor the sanction of historic truth? For Addison, who in general has made his piece a vehicle of the noblest and most patriotic sentiments, could not avoid making his catastrophe just what he has made it, without violating a notorious fact, and falsifying the character he exhibits.

Even in those plays in which the principles which false honour teaches are neither professedly inculcated nor vindicated; nay, where moreover the practices above alluded to, and especially the practice of duelling, are even reprobated in the progress of the piece; yet the hero who has

been reprieved from sin during four acts by the sage remonstrance of some interfering friend, or the imperious power of beauty ; beauty, which is to a stage hero that restraining or impelling power which law, or conscience, or scripture, are to other men ; still, in the conclusion, when the intrigue is dexterously completed, when the passion is worked up to its acme, and the valedictory scene is so near at hand that it becomes inconvenient to the poet that the impetuosity of his hero should be any longer restrained ; when his own patience and the expostulating powers of his friend are both exhausted together, and he seasonably winds up the drama by stabbing either his worst enemy or his best benefactor, or, as it still more frequently happens, himself ; still, notwithstanding his criminal catastrophe, the hero has been exhibited through all the preceding scenes as such a combination of perfections ; his behaviour has been so brave and so generous (and bravery and generosity are two qualities which the world boldly stakes against both tables of the decalogue), that the youthful spectator, especially if he have that amiable warmth and sensibility of soul which lay him so peculiarly open to seduction, is too much tempted to consider as venial the sudden and unpremeditated crime to which the unresisted impulse of the moment may have driven so accomplished a character. And a little tame tag of morality, set to a few musical periods by the unimpassioned friend, is borne down, absorbed, lost, in the impetuous but too engaging character of the feeling, fiery hero ; a character, the errors of which are now consummated by an act of murder, so affectingly managed, that censure is swallowed up in pity : the murderer is absolved by the weeping auditory, who are ready, if not to justify the crime, yet to vindicate the criminal. The drowsy moral at the close, slowly attempts to creep after the poison of the piece ; but it creeps in vain ; it can never expel that which it can never reach ; for one stroke of feeling, one natural expression of the passions, be the principle right or wrong, carries away the affections of the auditor beyond any of the poet's force of reasoning to control. And they know little of the power of the dramatic art, or of the conformation of the human mind, who do not know that the heart of the feeling spectator is always at the command of the passions in the hand of a true poet ; who snatches him with uncontrolled dominion

“ To Thebes and Athens when he will, and where.”

Now, to counteract the bias given by the passions, all the flowers of rhetoric, all the flights of mere poetry, and all the blunted weapons of logic united, are ineffectual. Of course, the concluding antidote never defeats the mischief of the piece ; the effect of the smooth moral is instantly obliterated, while that of the indented passion is perhaps indelible.

Let me now for a moment turn to the younger part of that sex, to whose service I have generally devoted my principal attention. A virtuous young woman, it will be said, who has been correctly educated, will turn with abhorrence from the unchaste scenes of a loose play. It is indeed so to be hoped ; and yet many plays which really deserve that character, escape that denomination. But I concede this point, and proceed to the more immediate object of my animadversions. The remark may be thought preposterous, should I observe, that, to a chaste and delicate young mind, there is in *good* plays one danger which, I will venture to assert, is almost more formidable than that which is often attached to pieces more obviously censurable. The more refined and delicate the passion of love is made to appear, the more insinuating, and, of course, the more dangerous, will the exquisite and reiterated representation of that passion be found. Now, love being the grand business of plays, those young ladies who are frequently attending them, will be liable to nourish a feeling which is often strong enough of itself, without this constant supply of foreign fuel, namely, that love is the grand business of life also. If the passion be avowedly illicit, her well-instructed conscience will arm her with scruples, and her sense of decorum will set her on her guard. While, on the other hand, the greater the purity with which the passion is exhibited, provided the exhibition be very touching and warm, the more deep and irresistible will be its effect on a tender and inexperienced heart ; nay, the more likely will the passion acted on the stage be to excite a corresponding passion in the heart of the young spectatress. If she have not yet felt the passion she sees so finely portrayed, she will wish to feel it ; and, the not having felt it, she will consider as something wanting to the perfection of her nature. She will ascribe the absence of it to a defect in her own heart which must be supplied, or to some untowardness in her own circumstances which must be removed. Thus her imagination will do the work of the passions, and the fancy will anticipate the feelings of the heart : the source this, of some of the most fatal disorders in the female character !

Now, to captivate such a tender and affectionate heart as that we are considering, the semblance of virtue is necessary ; for, while she will conceive of criminal passion as censurable, she will be equally apt to consider even the most imprudent passion as justifiable, so long as the idea of absolute crime is kept at a distance. If the love be represented as avowedly vicious, instead of lending herself to the illusion, she will allow it ought to be sacrificed to duty ; but if she thinks it innocent, she persuades herself that every duty should be sacrificed to it. Nay, she will value herself in proportion as she thinks she could imitate the heroine who is able to love with so much violence and so much purity at the same time. By frequent repetition, especially if there be a taste for romance and poetry in the innocent young mind, the feelings are easily transplanted from the theatre to the closet ; they are made to become a standard of action, and are brought home as the regulators of life and manners. The heart being thus filled with the pleasures of love a new era takes place in her mind, and she carries about with her an aptitude

to receive any impression herself, and a constantly waking and active desire to make this impression in return. The plain and sober duties of life begin to be uninteresting; she wishes them to be diversified with events, and enlivened by heroes. Though she retains her virtue, her sobermindedness is impaired; for she longs to be realizing those pains and pleasures, and to be acting over those scenes and sacrifices, which she so often sees represented. If the evils arising from frequent scenic representations to a young woman were limited to this single inconvenience, that it makes her sigh to be a heroine, it would be a strong reason why a discreet and pious mother should be slow in introducing her to them.

I purposely forbear, in this place, repeating any of those higher arguments drawn from the utter irreconcilableness of this indulgence of the fancy, of this gratification of the senses, this unbounded roving of the thoughts, with the divine injunction of bringing "every thought into the obedience of Christ."

But it will be said, perhaps, all this rigour may be very suitable to enthusiasts and fanatics, to the vulgar, the retired, and the obscure: but would you exclude the more liberal and polished part of society from the delight and instruction which may be derived from the great masters of the human heart, from Shakspeare particularly?

On this subject I think myself called upon to offer my opinion (such as it is) as unreservedly as I have taken the liberty of doing on the points considered in the former part of this preface. I think, then, that there is a substantial difference between seeing and reading a dramatic composition; and that the objections which lie so strongly against the one, are not, at least in the same degree, applicable to the other. Or, rather, while there is an essential and inseparable danger attendant on dramatic exhibitions, let the matter of the drama be ever so innocent, the danger in *reading* a play arises solely from the *sentiments* contained in it.

To read a moral play is little different from reading any other innocent poem; the dialogue form being a mere accident, and no way affecting the moral tendency of the piece. Nay, some excellent poets have chosen that form on account of its peculiar advantages, even when the nature of their subjects precluded the idea of theatrical exhibition. Thus Buchanan wrote his fine tragedies of "The Baptist," and "Jephthah," Grotius that of "Christ Suffering," and Milton that of "Samson Agonistes;" not to name the "Joseph," the "Bethulia Delivered," and some other pieces of the amiable Metastasio. Nothing, therefore, could be more unreasonable, than to proscribe from the study or the closet well-selected dramatic poetry. It may be read with safety, because it can there be read with soberness. The most animated speeches subside into comparative tameness, and, provided they are perfectly pure, produce no ruffle of the passions, no agitation of the senses, but merely afford a pleasant, and, it may be, a not unsalutary exercise to the imagination.

In all the different kinds of poetry, there will be a necessity for selection; and where could safer poetical amusement be found than in the works of Racine, whose *Athalie*, in particular (as we have had occasion elsewhere to observe), most happily illustrates an interesting piece of scripture history, at the same time that, considered as a composition, it is itself a model of poetical perfection. I may mention, as an exquisite piece, the *Masque of Comus*, and, as interesting poems in the dramatic form also, the *Caractacus*, and *Elfrida*, of Mason; the passing over which pieces in the volumes of that virtuous poet, merely because they are in a dramatic form, would be an instance of scrupulosity which one might venture to say no well-informed conscience could suggest.

Let neither, then, the devout and scrupulous, on the one hand, nor the captious caviller, on the other, object to this distinction; I mean between *reading* a dramatic composition, and *seeing* a theatrical exhibition, as if it were fanciful or arbitrary. In the latter, is it the mere repetition of the speeches which implies danger? is it this which attracts the audience? No: were even the best reader, if he did not bring in aid the novelty of a foreign language, to read the whole play himself, without scenic decorations, without dress, without gesticulation, would such an exhibition be numerous, or for any length of time, attended? What then chiefly draws the multitude? It is the semblance of real action which is given to the piece, by different persons supporting the different parts, and by their dress, their tones, their gestures, heightening the representation into a kind of enchantment. It is the concomitant pageantry, it is the splendour of the spectacle, and even the show of the spectators:—these are the circumstances which altogether fill the theatre—which altogether produce the effect—which altogether create the danger. These give a pernicious force to sentiments which, when read, merely explain the mysterious action of the human heart, but which, when thus uttered, thus accompanied, become contagious and destructive. These, in short, make up a scene of temptation and seduction, of overwrought voluptuousness and unnerving pleasure, which surely ill accords with "working out our salvation with fear and trembling," or with that frame of mind which implies that "the world is crucified to us, and we to the world."

I trust I have sufficiently guarded against the charge of inconsistency, even though I venture to hazard an opinion that, in company with a judicious friend or parent, many scenes of Shakspeare may be read not only without danger, but with improvement. Far be it from me to wish to abridge the innocent delights of life, where they may be enjoyed with benefit to the understanding, and without injury to the principles. Women, especially, whose walk in life is so circumscribed, and whose avenues of information are so few, may, I conceive, learn to know the

world with less danger, and to study human nature with more advantage, from the *perusal* of selected parts of this incomparable genius, than from most other attainable sources. I would in this view consider Shakspeare as a philosopher as well as poet, and I have been surprised to hear many pious people universally confound and reprobate this poet with the common herd of dramatists and novelists. To his acute and sagacious mind every varied position of the human heart, every shade of discrimination in the human character, all the minuter delicacies, all the exquisite touches, all the distinct affections, all the contending interests, all the complicated passions of the heart of man, seem, as far as is allowed to human inspection to discern them, to be laid open. Though destitute himself of the aids of literature, and of the polish of society, he seems to have possessed by intuition all the advantages that various learning and elegant society can bestow; and to have combined the warmest energies of passion, and the boldest strokes of imagination, with the justest proprieties of reasoning, and the exactest niceties of conduct. He makes every description a picture, and every sentiment an axiom. He seems to have known how every being which *did* exist would speak and act under every supposed circumstance and every possible situation; and how every being which *did not* exist must speak and act, if ever he were to be called into actual existence.

From the discriminated, the guarded, the qualified perusal of such an author, it would be impossible, nor does it appear to be necessary, to debar accomplished and elegantly educated young persons. Let not the above eulogium be censured as too strong or too bold. In almost every library they will find his writings; in almost every work of taste and criticism, the young reader will not fail to meet the panegyric of Shakspeare. The frequent allusions to him, and the beautiful quotations from him, will, if they light upon a corresponding taste, inflame it with a curiosity to peruse all his works. Now, would it not be safer to anticipate the danger which might result from a private and unqualified perusal, for the parent to select such pieces as have in them the fewest of those corruptions, which truth must allow that Shakspeare possesses in common with other dramatic poets? For who will deny that all the excellences we have ascribed to him are debased by passages of offensive grossness? are tarnished with indelicacy, false taste, and vulgarity? This is not the place for a discussion of those faults, too obvious to be overlooked, too numerous to be detailed, too strong to be palliated. Let me, however, be permitted to observe, that though Shakspeare often disgusts by single passages and expressions (which I will not vindicate by ascribing them to the false taste of the age in which he wrote; for though that may extenuate the fault of the poet, it does not diminish the danger of the reader), yet perhaps the general tendency of his pieces is less corrupt than that of the pieces of almost any dramatist; and the reader rises from the perusal of Shakspeare without those distinct images of evil on his mind, without having his heart so dissolved by amatory scenes, or his mind so warped by corrupt reasoning, or his heart so inflamed with seducing principles, as he will have experienced from other writers of the same description, however exempt *their* works may be from the more broad and censurable vices of composition which disfigure many parts of Shakspeare. Lest I be misrepresented, let it be observed, that I am now distinguishing the general *result* arising from the *tendency* of his pieces, from the effect of particular passages; and this is the reason why a discriminated perusal is so important. For, after all, the *general disposition of mind* with which we rise from the reading of a work, is the best criterion of its utility or mischief. To the tragedies of Shakspeare, too, belongs this superiority, that his pieces being faithful histories of the human heart, and portraits of the human character, love is only introduced as one passion among many which enslave mankind; whereas by most other play writers, it is treated as the monopolizing tyrant of the heart.

It is not because I consider Shakspeare as a correct moralist and an unerring guide, that I suggest the advantage of having the youthful curiosity allayed by a partial perusal, and under prudent inspection: but it is for this very different reason, lest, by having that curiosity stimulated by the incessant commendation of this author, with which both books and conversation abound, young persons should be excited to devour in secret an author who, if devoured in the gross, will not fail, by many detached passages, to put a delicate reader in the situation of his own *Ancient Pistol* when eating the leek; that is, to swallow and execrate at the same time.

But to conclude,—which I will do with a recapitulation of the principal objects already touched upon. That I may not be misunderstood, let me repeat that this preface is not addressed to the gay and dissolute; to such as profess themselves to be “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;”—but it is addressed to the more soberminded; to those who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ; who wish to be enlightened by its doctrines, to be governed by its precepts, and who profess to be “seeking a better country, even a heavenly one.” The question then which we have been asking is, whether the stage, in its present state, be a proper amusement for such a character? What it would be, if perfectly reformed, and cast into the Christian mould, we have considered as another question, which it will be time enough to answer when the reformation itself takes place.

Neither (as has been observed) is it to the present purpose to insist that theatrical amusements are the most *rational*; for the question we have undertaken to agitate is, whether they are *blameless*? In this view, the circumstance of going but *seldom* cannot satisfy a conscientious mind; for if the amusement be *right*, we may partake of it with moderation, as of other awful pleasures; if *wrong*, we should *never* partake of it.

Some individuals may urge that the amusements of the theatre never had the bad effects on their minds which they are said to have on the minds of others ; but supposing this to be really the case (which however may admit of doubt), ought not such persons to reflect, that by their presence they sanction that which is obviously hurtful to others, and which must, if so, be displeasing to God !

The stage is by universal concurrence allowed to be no indifferent thing. The impressions it makes on the mind are deep and strong ; deeper and stronger, perhaps, than are made by any other amusement. If then such impressions be in the general hostile to Christianity, the whole resolves itself into this short question—Should a Christian frequent it

[In addition to what has here been advanced on the subject of theatrical amusements, the editor hopes to be excused for inserting the conclusion of Jeremy Collier's "Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage :—" printed in 1699.

"These entertainments are, as it were, literally renounced in baptism. They are the *vanities of the wicked world, and the works of the devil*, in the most open and emphatical signification. *What communion has light with darkness, and what concord has Christ with Belial ?* Call you this diversion ? can profaneness be such an irresistible delight ? Does the crime of the performance make the spirit of the satisfaction, and is the scorn of Christianity the entertainment of Christians ? Is it such a pleasure to hear the scriptures burlesqued ? Is ribaldry so very obliging, and atheism so charming a quality ? Are we indeed willing to quit the privilege of our nature, to surrender our charter of immortality, and throw up the pretences to another life ? It may be so ; but then we should do well to remember that *nothing* is not in our power. Our desires did not make us, neither can they unmake us. But I hope our wishes are not so mean, and that we have a better sense of the dignity of our being. And if so, how can we be pleased with those things which would degrade us into brutes, which ridicule our creed, and turn all our expectations into romance.

"And, after all, the jest on't is, these men would make us believe their design is virtue and reformation. In good time ! they are likely to combat vice with success, who destroy the principles of good and evil ! Take them at the best, and they do no more than expose a little humour and formality. But then, as the matter is managed, the correction is much worse than the fault. They laugh at pedantry and teach atheism ; cure a pimple, and give the plague. I heartily wish they would have let us alone. To exchange virtue for behaviour, is a hard bargain. Is not plain honesty much better than hypocrisy well dressed ? what's sight good for, without substance ? what is a wellbred libertine, but a wellbred knave ? One that can't prefer conscience to pleasure, without calling himself fool ; and will sell his friend, or his father, if need be, for his convenience.

"In short : nothing can be more disserviceable to probity and religion than the management of the *stage*. It cherishes those passions, and rewards those vices, which 'tis the business of reason to discountenance. It strikes at the root of principle, draws off the inclinations from virtue, and spoils good education. It is the most effectual means to emasculate people's spirits, and debauch their manners. How *many* of the unwary have these sirens devoured ? and how often has the best blood been tainted with this infection ? what disappointments of parents, what confusion in families, and what beggary in estates, have been hence occasioned ? and, which is still worse, the mischief spreads daily, and the malignity grows more envenomed. The fever works up towards madness, and will scarcely endure to be touched. And what hope is there of health, when the patient strikes in with the disease, and flies in the face of the remedy ? Can religion retrieve us ? yes, when we don't despise it. But while our notions are naught, our lives will hardly be otherwise. What can the assistance of the church signify to those who are more ready to rally the preacher, than practise the sermon ? to those who are overgrown with pleasure, and hardened in ill custom ? who have neither patience to hear, nor conscience to take hold of ? you may almost as well feed a man without a mouth, as give advice where there's no disposition to receive it. It is true, as long as there is life there's hope. Sometimes the force of argument, and the grace of God, and the anguish of affliction, may strike through the prejudice, and make their way into the soul. But these circumstances don't always meet, and then the case is extremely dangerous. For this miserable temper, we may thank the *stage*, in a great measure ; and, therefore, if I mistake not, they have the least pretence to favour, and the most need of repentance of all men living."]

For plot see Vol. 1.

A Classical Play.

THE INFLEXIBLE CAPTIVE:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT WAS ACTED IN 1774, AT THE THEATRE ROYAL AT BATH.

"The man resolv'd, and steady to his trust,
Inflexible to ill, and obstinately just."

TO

THE HON. MRS. BOSCAWEN.

DEAR MADAM,

It seems somewhat extraordinary, that although, with persons of great merit and delicacy, no virtue stands in higher estimation than truth; yet, in such an address as the present, there would be some danger of offending them, by a strict adherence to it: I mean, by uttering truths so generally acknowledged, that every one except the person addressed would acquit the writer of flattery. And it will be a singular circumstance to see a dedication without praise, to a lady possessed of every quality and accomplishment which can justly entitle her to it.

I am, dear madam, with great respect,

Your most obedient, and very obliged humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE ARGUMENT.

AMONG the great names which have done honour to antiquity in general, and to the Roman Republic in particular, that of Marcus Attilius Regulus has, by the general consent of all ages, been considered as one of the most splendid, since he not only sacrificed his labours, his liberty, and his life, for the good of his country, but, by a greatness of soul almost peculiar to himself, contrived to make his very misfortunes contribute to that glorious end.

After the Romans had met with various successes in the first Punic war, under the command of Regulus, victory at length declared for the opposite party—the Roman army was totally overthrown, and Regulus himself taken prisoner by Xantippus, a Lacedæmonian general in the service of the Carthaginians: the victorious enemy, exulting in so important a conquest, kept him many years in close imprisonment, and loaded him with the most cruel indignities. They thought it was now in their power to make their own terms with Rome, and determined to send Regulus thither, with their ambassador, to negotiate a peace, or at least an exchange of captives, thinking he would gladly persuade his countrymen to discontinue a war which necessarily prolonged his captivity. They previously exacted from him an oath to return, should his embassy prove unsuccessful; at the same time giving him to understand, that he must expect to suffer a cruel death if he failed in it: this they artfully intimated, as the strongest motive for him to leave no means unattempted to accomplish their purpose.

At the unexpected arrival of this venerable hero, the Romans expressed the wildest transports of joy, and would have submitted to almost any conditions, to procure his enlargement; but Regulus, so far from availing himself of his influence with the senate to obtain any personal advantages, employed it to induce them to reject proposals so evidently tending to dishonour their country, declaring his fixed resolution to return to bondage and death, rather than violate his oath.

He at last extorted from them their consent; and departed amid the tears of his family, the importunities of his friends, the applauses of the senate, and the tumultuous opposition of the people: and, as a great poet of his own nation beautifully observes, "he embarked for Carthage as calm and unconcerned, as if, on finishing the tedious lawsuits of his clients, he was retiring to Venafrian fields, or the sweet country of Tarentum."

* * * This piece is a pretty close imitation of the *Attilio Regolo* of Metastasio, but enlarged and extended into a tragedy of five acts. Historical truth has in general been followed, except in some less essential instances, particularly that of placing the return of Regulus to Rome posterior to the death of his wife. The writer herself never considered the plot as sufficiently bustling and dramatic for representation.

*here is the same affair as Hannibal & the use of
reciprocal and mutual Republics and the use of*

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE REV. DR. LANGHORNE.

DEEP in the bosom of departed days,
Where the first gems of human glory blaze;
Where, crown'd with flowers, in wreaths im-
mortal dress'd,
The sacred shades of ancient virtue rest;
With joy they search, who joy can feel, to find
Some honest reason still to love mankind.
There the fair foundress of the scene to-night,
Explores the paths that dignify delight;
The regions of the mighty dead pervades;
The sibyl she that leads us to the shades.
O may each blast of ruder breath forbear
To waft her light leaves on the ruthless air;
Since she, as heedless, strives not to maintain
This tender offspring of her teeming brain!
For this poor birth was no provision made,
A flower that sprung and languish'd in the shade.

On Avon's banks, forsaken and forlorn,
This careless mother left her elder born;
And though unlike what Avon hail'd of yore,
Those giant sons that Shakspeare's banners
bore,
Yet may we yield this little offspring grace,
And love the last and least of such a race.
Shall the strong scenes, where senatorial Rome
Mourn'd o'er the rigour of a patriot's doom;
Where melting nature, aw'd by virtue's eye,
Hid the big drop, and held the bursting sigh,
Where all that majesty of soul can give,
Truth, honour, pity, fair affection live:
Shall scenes like these, the glory of an age,
Gleam from the press, nor triumph on the stage?
Forbid it, Britons! and, as Romans brave,
Like Romans boast one citizen to save.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

REGULUS.—*Mr. Henderson.*PUBLIUS, his son.—*Mr. Dimond.*MANLIUS, the Consul.—*Mr. Blissett.*LICI- NINIUS, a Tribune.—*Mr. Brown.*HAMILCAR, the Carthaginian Ambassador.—*Mr. Rowbotham.*ATTILIA, daughter of Regulus.—*Miss Mansell.*BARCE, a Carthaginian captive.—*Miss Wheeler.*

Guards, Lictors, People, &c.

Scene.—Near the Gates of Rome.

ACT I.

*SCENE—A Hall in the Consul's Palace.**Enter LICINIUS, ATTILIA, Lictors, and People.*

Lic. ATTILIA waiting here? Is't possible?
Is this a place for Regulus's daughter?
Just gods! must that incomparable maid
Associate here with Lictors and Plebeians?

Att. Yes, on this threshold patiently I wait
The consul's coming; I would make him blush
To see me here his suiter. O, Licinius,
This is no time for form and cold decorum;
Five lagging years have crept their tedious round,
And Regulus, alas! is still a slave;
A wretched slave, unpitied, and forgotten;
No other tribute paid his memory,
Than the sad tears of his unhappy child;
If *she* be silent, who will speak for Regulus?

Lic. Let not her sorrows make my fair unjust.
Is there in Rome a heart so dead to virtue,
That does not beat in Regulus's cause?
That wearies not the gods for his return?
That does not think all subjugated Afric,
A slender, unimportant acquisition,
If, in return for this extended empire,
The freedom of thy father be the purchase?
These are the feelings of imperial Rome;
My own, it were superfluous to declare.
For if *Licinius* were to weigh his merit,
That he's *thy father* were sufficient glory.
He was my leader, train'd me up to arms;
And, if I boast a spark of Roman honour,
I owe it to his precepts and his virtues.

Att. And yet I have not seen Licinius stir.

Lic. Ah! spare me thy reproaches—what,
when late

A private citizen, could I attempt?
'Twas not the lust of power, or pride of rank,
Which made me seek the dignity of tribune;
No, my Attilia, but I fondly hop'd
'Twould strengthen and enforce the just request,
Which, as a *private* man, I vainly urg'd;
But now, the people's representative,
I shall demand, Attilia, to be heard.

Att. Ah! let us not too hastily apply
This dangerous remedy; I would not rouse
Fresh tumults 'twixt the people and the senate:
Each views with jealousy the idol, power,
Which, each possessing, would alike abuse.
What one demands, the other still denies.
Might I advise you, try a *gentler* method;
I know that every moment Rome expects
Th' ambassador of Carthage, nay, 'tis said
The conscript fathers are already met
To give him audience in Bellona's temple.
There might the consul at my suit, Licinius,
Propose the ransom of my captive father.

Lic. Ah! think, Attilia, who that consul is,
Manlius, thy father's rival, and his foe:
His ancient rival, and his foe profess'd:
To hope in him, my fair, were fond delusion.

Att. Yet tho' his rival, Manlius, is a *Roman*:
Nor will he think of private enmities,
Weigh'd in the balance with the good of Rome,
Let me at least make trial of his honour.

Lic. Be it so, my fair! but elsewhere make
thy suit;

Let not the consul meet Attilia *here*,

*his play reminds one to a certain
extent of Hannah's "Regulus" which*

Confounded with the refuse of the people.

Att. Yes, I will see him *here, e'en here, Licinius.*

Let *Manlius* blush, not *me*: *here* will I speak,
Here shall he answer me.

Lic. Behold, he comes.

Att. Do thou retire.

Lic. O, bless me with a look,
One parting look, at least.

Att. Know, my *Licinius*,
That at this moment I am all the *daughter*,
The filial feelings now possess my soul,
And other passions find no entrance there.

Lic. O sweet, yet powerful influence of virtue,
That charms though cruel, though unkind sub-
And what was love exalts to admiration! [dues,
Yes, 'tis the privilege of souls like thine
To conquer most when least they aim at conquest.
Yet, ah! vouchsafe to think upon *Licinius*,
Nor fear to rob thy father of his due;
For surely virtue and the gods approve
Unwearied constancy and spotless love.

[*Exit LICINIUS.*]

Enter MANLIUS.

Att. Ah! *Manlius*, stay, a moment stay, and
hear me.

Man. I did not think to meet thee *here*, *Attilia*;
The place so little worthy of the guest.

Att. It would, indeed, have ill become *Attilia*,
While still her father was a Roman citizen;
But for the daughter of a slave to Carthage,
It surely is most fitting.

Man. Say, *Attilia*,
What is the purpose of thy coming hither?

Att. What is the purpose, patience, pitying
Heaven!

Tell me, how long, to Rome's eternal shame,
To fill with horror all the wond'ring world,
My father still must groan in Punic chains,
And waste the tedious hours in cruel bondage?
Days follow days, and years to years succeed,
And Rome forgets her hero, is content
That *Regulus* be a forgotten slave.
What is his crime? is it that he preferr'd
His country's profit to his children's good?
Is it th' unshaken firmness of his soul,
Just, uncorrupt, and, boasting, let me speak it,
Poor in the highest dignities of Rome?
Illustrious crime! O glorious poverty!

Man. But know, *Attilia*—

Att. O, have patience with me.
And can ungrateful *Rome* so soon forget?
Can those who breathe the air *he* breath'd forget
The great, the godlike virtues of my father?
There's not a part of *Rome* but speaks his praise.
The *streets*—thro' them the *hero* pass'd trium-
The *forum*—there the *legislator* plann'd [phant:
The wisest, purest laws—the senate-house—
There spoke the *patriot Roman*—there his voice
Secur'd the public safety: *Manlius*, yes;
The wisdom of his counsels match'd his valour.
Enter the temples—mount the *capitol*—
And tell me, *Manlius*, to what hand but *his*
They owe their trophies, and their ornaments,
Their foreign banners, and their boasted ensigns,
Tarentine, *Punic*, and *Sicilian* spoils?
Nay, e'en those *lictors* who precede thy steps,

Vol. I.

This consul's purple which invests thy limbs,
All, all were *Regulus's*, were my father's.
And yet this hero, this exalted patriot,
This man of virtue, this immortal Roman,
In base requital for his services,
Is left to linger out a life in chains,
No honours paid him but a daughter's tears.
O *Rome*! O *Regulus*! O thankless citizens!

Man. Just are thy tears:—thy father well
deserves them;

But know thy censure is unjust, *Attilia*.
The fate of *Regulus* is felt by all:
We know and mourn the cruel woes he suffers
From barbarous *Carthage*.

Att. *Manlius*, you mistake;
Alas! it is not *Carthage* which is barbarous;
'Tis *Rome*, ungrateful *Rome*, is the barbarian;
Carthage but punishes a foe profess'd,
But *Rome* betrays her hero and her father:
Carthage remembers how he slew her sons,
But *Rome* forgets the blood he shed for *her*:
Carthage revenges an acknowledged foe,
But *Rome* with basest perfidy rewards
The glorious hand that bound her brow with
laurels.

Which now is the barbarian, *Rome* or *Carthage*!

Man. What can be done?

Att. A woman shall inform you.
Convene the senate; let them straight propose
A ransom, or exchange for *Regulus*,
To *Africa's* ambassador. Do this,
And heav'n's best blessings crown your days
with peace.

Man. Thou speakest like a *daughter*, I, *Attilia*,
Must as a *consul* act; I must consult
The good of *Rome*, and with her good, her glory.
Would it not tarnish her unspotted fame,
To sue to *Carthage* on the terms thou wishest?
Att. Ah! rather own thou'rt still my father's
foe.

Man. Ungen'rous maid! no fault of mine
concurr'd

To his destruction. 'Twas the chance of war.
Farewell! ere this the senate is assembled—
My presence is requir'd.—Speak to the fathers,
And try to soften *their* austerity;
My rigour they may render vain, for know,
I am *Rome's consul*, not her *king*, *Attilia*.

[*Exit MANLIUS with the lictors, &c.*
Att. (*alone.*) This flattering hope, alas! has
prov'd abortive.

One consul is our foe, the other absent.
What shall the sad *Attilia* next attempt?
Suppose I crave assistance from the people!
Ah! my unhappy father, on what hazards,
What strange vicissitudes, what various turns,
Thy life, thy liberty, thy all depends!

Enter BARCE (in haste).

Bar. Ah, my *Attilia*!

Att. Whence this eager haste!

Bar. Th' ambassador of *Carthage* is arriv'd.

Att. And why does that excite such won-
drous transport?

Bar. I bring another cause of greater still.

Att. Name it, my *Barce*.

Bar. *Regulus* comes with him.

Att. My father! can it be?

2 K

Bar. Thy father—Regulus.

Att. Thou art deceiv'd, or thou deceiv'st thy friend.

Bar. Indeed I saw him not, but every tongue Speaks the glad tidings.

Enter PUBLIUS

Att. See where Publius comes.

Pub. My sister, I'm transported! Oh Attilia, He's here, our father—Regulus is come!

Att. I thank you, gods: O my full heart! where is he?

Hasten, my brother, lead, O lead me to him.

Pub. It is too soon: restrain thy fond impatience.

With Africa's ambassador he waits,
Until th' assembled senate give him audience.

Att. Where was he, Publius, when thou saw'st him first?

Pub. You know, in quality of Roman questor, My duty 'tis to find a fit abode

For all ambassadors of foreign states.
Hearing the Carthaginian was arriv'd,
I hasten'd to the port, when, O just gods!

No foreigner, no foe, no African
Salutes my eye, but Regulus—my father!

Att. Oh mighty joy! too exquisite delight!
What said the hero? tell me, tell me all,
And ease my anxious breast.

Pub. Ere I arriv'd,
My father stood already on the shore,
Fixing his eyes with anxious eagerness,
As straining to descry the capitol.
I saw, and flew with transport to embrace him,
Pronounced with wildest joy the name of father—
With reverence seiz'd his venerable hand,
And would have kiss'd it; when the awful hero,
With that stern grandeur which made Carthage tremble,

Drew back—stood all collected in himself,
And said austere, Know, thou rash young man,
That slaves in Rome have not the rights of fathers.

Then asked, if yet the senate was assembled,
And where? which having heard, without indulging

The fond effusions of his soul, or mine,
He suddenly retired. I flew with speed
To find the consul, but as yet, success
Attends not my pursuit. Direct me to him.

Bar. Publius, you'll find him in Bellona's temple.

Att. Then Regulus returns to Rome a slave!

Pub. Yes, but be comforted; I know he brings
Proposals for a peace; his will's his fate.

Att. Rome may perhaps refuse to treat of peace.

Pub. Didst thou behold the universal joy
At his return, thou wouldst not doubt success.
There's not a tongue in Rome but, wild with transport,

Proclaims aloud that Regulus is come!
The streets are filled with thronging multitudes,
Pressing with eager gaze to catch a look.
The happy man who can descry him first,
Points him to his next neighbour, he to his;

Then what a thunder of applause goes round;
What music to the ear of filial love!

Attilia! not a Roman eye was seen,
But shed pure tears of exquisite delight.
Judge of my feelings by thy own, my sister.
By the large measure of thy fond affection,
Judge mine.

Att. Where is Licinius? find him out,
My joy is incomplete till he partakes it.
When doubts and fears have rent my anxious
In all my woes he kindly bore a part: [heart,
Felt all my sorrows with a soul sincere,
Sigh'd as I sigh'd, and number'd tear for tear:
Now favouring heav'n my ardent vows has blest,
He shall divide the transports of my breast.

[Exit ATTILIA.]

Pub. Barce, adieu!

Bar. Publius, a moment hear me.
Know'st thou the name of Africa's ambassador?

Pub. Hamilcar!

Bar. Son of Hanno?

Pub. Yes! the same.

Bar. Ah me! Hamilcar!—How shall I support it! (aside.)

Pub. Ah, charming maid! the blood forsakes thy cheek:

Is he the rival of thy Publius? speak,
And tell me all the rigour of my fate.

Bar. Hear me, my lord. Since I have been thy slave,

Thy goodness, and the friendship of Attilia,
Have soften'd all the horrors of my fate.

Till now I have not felt the weight of bondage.
Till now—ah, Publius!—think me not ungrateful,

I would not wrong thee—I will be sincere—
I will expose the weakness of my soul.

Know then, my lord—how shall I tell thee all!

Pub. Stop, cruel maid, nor wound thy Publius more;

I dread the fatal frankness of thy words:
Spare me the pain of knowing I am scorn'd;

And if thy heart's devoted to another,
Yet do not tell it me; in tender pity
Do not, my fair, dissolve the fond illusion,
The dear delightful visions I have form'd
Of future joy, and fond exhaustless love.

[Exit PUBLIUS.]

Bar. (alone.) And shall I see him then, see my Hamilcar,

Pride of my soul, and lord of all my wishes?

The only man in all our burning Afric
Who ever taught my bosom how to love!

Down, foolish heart! be calm, my busy thoughts!

If at his name I feel these strange emotions,
How shall I see, how meet my conqueror?
O let not those presume to judge of joy [gives.
Who ne'er have felt the pangs which absence
Such tender transport those alone can prove,
Who long, like me, have known disastrous love;
The tears that fell, the sighs that once were paid,
Like grateful incense on his altar laid;
The lambent flame rekindle, not destroy,
And woes remember'd heighten present joy.

[Exit.]

ACT II.

SCENE—*The inside of the Temple of Bellona—Seats for the Senators and Ambassadors—Lictors guarding the entrance.*

MANLIUS, PUBLIUS, and Senators.

Man. Let Regulus be sent for to our presence ;
And with him the ambassador of Carthage.
Is it then true the foe would treat of peace ?

Pub. They wish at least our captives were
exchang'd,

And send my father to declare their wish :
If he obtain it, well : if not, then Regulus
Returns to meet the vengeance of the foe,
And pay for your refusal with his blood :
He ratified this treaty with his oath,
And, ere he quitted Carthage, heard, unmov'd,
The dreadful preparations for his death, [men !
Should he return. O Romans ! O my country-
Can you resign your hero to your foe ?
Say, can you give up Regulus to Carthage ?

Man. Peace, Publius, peace, for see, thy
father comes.

Enter HAMILCAR and REGULUS.

Ham. Why dost thou stop ? dost thou forget
this temple ?
I thought these walls had been well known to
Regulus !

Reg. Hamilcar ! I was thinking what I was
When last I saw them, and what now I am.

Ham. (to the consul.) Carthage, by me, to
Rome this greeting sends ;
'That, wearied out, at length, with bloody war,
If Rome inclines to peace, she offers it.

Man. We will at leisure answer thee. Be
seated.

Come, Regulus, resume thine ancient place.

Reg. (pointing to the senators.) Who then
are these ?

Man. The senators of Rome.

Reg. And who art thou ?

Man. What mean'st thou ? I'm her consul ;
Hast thou so soon forgotten Manlius ? [Rome,

Reg. And shall a slave then have a place in
Among her consuls and her senators ?

Man. Yes !—For her heroes Rome forgets
Softens their harsh austerity for thee, [her laws ;
'To whom she owes her conquest and her triumphs.

Reg. Rome may forget, but Regulus remem-
ber. Man. Was ever man so obstinately good !

(Aside.)

Pub. (rising.) Fathers, your pardon. I can sit
no longer. (To the senators.)

Reg. Publius, what dost thou mean ?

Pub. To do my duty ;

Where Regulus must stand, shall Publius sit ?
Reg. Alas ! O Rome, how are thy manners
chang'd !

When last I left thee, ere I sail'd for Afric,
It was a crime to think of private duties
When public cares requir'd attention.—Sit,
(To Pub.) And learn to occupy thy place with
honour.

Pub. Forgive me, sir, if I refuse obedience ;
My heart o'erflows with duty to my father.

Reg. Know, Publius, that thy duty's at an
Thy father died when he became a slave. [end ;
Man. Now urge thy suit, Hamilcar, we at-
tend. [senger ;

Ham. Afric hath chosen Regulus her mes-
In him, both Carthage and Hamilcar speak.

Man. (to Reg.) We are prepar'd to hear thee.
Ham. (to Reg.) Ere thou speak'st

Maturely weigh what thou hast sworn to do,
Should Rome refuse to treat with us of peace.

Reg. What I have sworn I will fulfil, Ham-
Be satisfied. [ilcar.

Pub. Ye guardian gods of Rome,
With your own eloquence inspire him now !

Reg. Carthage by me this embassy has sent ;
If Rome will leave her undisturb'd possession
Of all she now enjoys, she offers peace ;
But if you rather wish protracted war,
Her next proposal is, *exchange of captives* ;—
If you demand advice of Regulus,
Reject them both.—

Ham. What dost thou mean ?

Pub. My father !

Man. Exalted fortitude ! I'm lost in wonder.
(Aside.) [breath,

Reg. Romans ! I will not idly spend my
To show the dire effects of such a peace ;
The foes, who beg it, show their dread of war.

Man. But the exchange of prisoners thou pro-
posest ? [nic fraud.

Reg. That artful scheme conceals some Pu-
Ham. Roman, beware ! hast thou so soon
forgotten ?

Reg. I will fulfil the treaty I have sworn to.
Pub. All will be ruined.

Reg. Conscrip't fathers ! hear me.— [ills,
Though this exchange teems with a thousand
Yet 'tis th' example I would deprecate.

This treaty fix'd, Rome's honour is no more ;
Should her degenerate sons be promis'd life,
Dishonest life, and worthless liberty,
Her glory, valour, military pride,
Her fame, her fortitude, her all were lost.

What honest captive of them all would wish
With shame to enter her imperial gates,
The flagrant scourge of slavery on his back ?
None, none, my friends, would wish a fate so vile,
But those base cowards who resign'd their arms,
Unstain'd with hostile blood, and poorly sued,
Through ignominious fear of death, for bond-
age ;

The scorn, the laughter, of th' insulting foe.
O shame ! shame ! shame ! eternal infamy !

Man. However hurtful this exchange may be,
The liberty, the life of Regulus,
More than compensates for it.

Reg. Thou art mistaken.—

This Regulus is a mere mortal man,
Yielding apace to all th' infirmities
Of weak, decaying nature.—I am old,
Nor can my future, feeble services,
Assist my country much ; but mark me well ;
The young fierce heroes you'd restore to Car-
thage,

In lieu of this old man, are her chief bulwarks.
Fathers ! in vig'rous youth this well-strung arm
Fought for my country, fought and conquer'd
for her :

That was the time to prize its service high.
Now, weak and nerveless, let the foe possess it,
For it can harm them in the field no more.
Let Carthage have the poor, degrading triumph,
To close these failing eyes ; but, O, my coun-
trymen !

Check their vain hopes, and show aspiring Afric
That heroes are the common growth of Rome.

Man. Unequall'd fortitude.

Pub. O fatal virtue ! [sounds me.

Ham. What do I hear ! this constancy con-

Man. (to the senators.) Let honour be the
spring of all our actions,

Not interest, fathers. Let no selfish views
Preach safety at the price of truth and justice.

Reg. If Rome would thank me, I will teach
her how.

—Know, fathers, that these savage Africans
Thought me so base, so very low of soul,
That the poor, wretched privilege, of breathing,
Would force me to betray my country to them.
Have these barbarians any tortures left,
To match the cruelty of such a thought ?
Revenge me, fathers ! and I'm still a Roman.
Ann, ann yourselves, prepare your citizens,
Snatch your imprison'd eagles from their fanes,
Fly to the shores of Carthage, force her gates,
Die every Roman sword in Punic blood—
And do such deeds—that when I shall return
(As I have sworn, and am resolved to do),
I may behold with joy, reflected back,
The terrors of your rage in the dire visages
Of my astonish'd executioners. [in wonder !

Ham. Surprise has chill'd my blood ! I'm lost

Pub. Does no one answer ? must my father
perish ! [question :

Man. Romans, we must defer th' important
Maturest counsels must determine on it.

Rest we awhile :—Nature requires some pause
From high-raised admiration. Thou, Hamilcar,
Shalt shortly know our final resolution.
Meantime, we go to supplicate the gods.

Reg. Have you a doubt remaining ? Man-
lius, speak.

Man. Yes, Regulus, I think the danger less
To lose th' advantage thy advice suggests,
Than would accrue to Rome in losing thee,
Whose wisdom might direct, whose valour
guard her.

Athirst for glory thou wouldst rush on death,
And for thy country's sake wouldst greatly perish.
Too vast a sacrifice thy zeal requires,
For Rome must bleed when Regulus expires.

Exeunt consul and senators.

Manent REGULUS, PUBLIUS, HAMILCAR ; to
them enter ATTILIA and LICINIUS.

Ham. Does Regulus fulfil his promise thus ?

Reg. I've promis'd to return, and I will do it.

Att. My father ! think a moment.

Lic. Ah ! my friend !

Lic. and *Att.* O, by this hand, we beg—

Reg. Away ! no more.

Thanks to Rome's guardian gods, I'm yet a slave,
And will be still a slave, to make Rome free !

Att. Was the exchange refused ? Oh ! ease
my fears.

Reg. Publius ! conduct Hamilcar and myself

To the abode thou hast for each provided.

Att. A foreign residence ? a strange abode ?
And will my father spurn his household gods !

Pub. My sire a stranger ?—Will he taste no
more

The smiling blessings of his cheerful home ?

Reg. Dost thou not know the laws of Rome
A foe's ambassador within her gates ? [forbid

Pub. This rigid law does not extend to thee.

Reg. Yes ; did it not alike extend to all,

'Twere tyranny.—The law rights every man,
But favours none.

Att. Then, O my father,
Allow thy daughter to partake thy fate !

Reg. Attilia ! no. The present exigence
Demands far other thoughts, than the soft cares,
The fond effusions, the delightful weakness,
The dear affections 'twixt the child and parent.

Att. How is my father chang'd from what
I've known him ! [Regulus,

Reg. The fate of Regulus is chang'd, not
I am the same ; in laurels or in chains.

'Tis the same principle ; the same fix'd soul,
Unmov'd itself, though circumstances change.
The native vigour of the free-born mind
Still struggles with, still conquers, adverse for-
tune ;

Soars above chains, invincible though van-
quish'd.

[*Exeunt* REGULUS and PUBLIUS.

ATTILIA, HAMILCAR, going, enter BARCE.

Bar. Ah ! my Hamilcar.

Ham. Ah ! my long-lost BARCE .
Again I lose thee ; Regulus rejects
Th' exchange of prisoners Africa proposes.

My heart's too full. Oh, I have much to say !
Bar. Yet you unkindly leave me, and say
nothing. [loves,

Ham. Ah ! didst thou love as thy Hamilcar
Words were superfluous ; in my eyes, my Barce,
Thou'dst read the tender eloquence of love,
Th' uncounterfeited language of my heart.
A single look betrays the soul's soft feelings,
And shows imperfect speech of little worth.

[*Exit* HAMILCAR.

Att. My father then conspires his own de-
Is it not so ? [struction.

Bar. Indeed, I fear it much ;
But as the senate has not yet resolv'd, [ment ;
There is some room for hope ; lose not a mo-
And, ere the conscript fathers are assembled,
Try all the powers of winning eloquence,
Each gentle art of feminine persuasion,
The love of kindred, and the faith of friends,
To bend the rigid Romans to thy purpose.

Att. Yes, Barce, I will go ; I will exert
My little pow'r, though hopeless of success.
Undone Attilia ! fall'n from hope's gay heights
Down the dread precipice of deep despair.
So some tir'd mariner the coast espies,
And his lov'd home explores with straining eyes ;
Prepares with joy to quit the treacherous deep,
Hush'd every wave, and every wind asleep ;
But, ere he lands upon the well-known shore,
Wild storms arise, and furious billows roar,
Tear the fond wretch from all his hopes away,
And drive his shatter'd bark again to sea.

ACT III.

SCENE—A Portico of a Palace without the gates of Rome.—The abode of the Carthaginian ambassador.

Enter REGULUS and PUBLIUS meeting.

Reg. Ah! Publius here at such a time as this!

Know'st thou the important question that the This very hour debate!—Thy country's glory, Thy father's honour, and the public good? Dost thou know this, and fondly linger here?

Pub. They're not yet met, my father.

Reg. Haste—away—
Support my counsel in th' assembled senate,
Confirm their wav'ring virtue by thy courage,
And Regulus shall glory in his boy.

Pub. Ah! spare thy son the most ungrateful What!—supplicate the ruin of my father!

Reg. The good of Rome can never hurt her sons.

Pub. In pity to thy children, spare thyself.

Reg. Dost thou then think that mine's a frantic bravery?

That Regulus would rashly seek his fate?

Publius! how little dost thou know thy sire!

Misjudging youth! learn, that like other men,

I shun the evil, and I seek the good;

But that I find in guilt, and this in virtue.

Were it not guilt, guilt of the blackest die,

Even to think of freedom at th' expense

Of my dear bleeding country! to me, therefore,

Freedom and life would be the heaviest evils;

But to preserve that country, to restore her,

To heal her wounds, though at the price of life,

Or, what is dearer far, the price of liberty,

Is virtue—therefore, slavery and death

Are Regulus's good—his wish—his choice.

Pub. Yet sure our country—

Reg. Is a whole, my Publius,
Of which we all are parts, nor should a citizen
Regard his interests as distinct from hers;
No hopes or fears should touch his patriot soul,
But what affect her honour or her shame.

E'en when in hostile fields he bleeds to save her,

'Tis not his blood he loses, 'tis his country's;

He only pays her back a debt he owes.

To her he's bound for birth and education:

Her laws secure him from domestic feuds,

And from the foreign foe her arms protect him.

She lends him honours, dignity, and rank,

His wrongs revenges, and his merit pays;

And, like a tender and indulgent mother,

Loads him with comforts, and would make his state

As blest as nature and the gods design'd it.

Such gifts, my son, have their alloy of pain,

And let th' unworthy wretch, who will not bear

His portion of the public burden, lose

Th' advantages it yields;—let him retire

From the dear blessings of a social life,

And from the sacred laws which guard those blessings;

Renounce the civiliz'd abodes of man,

With kindred brutes one common shelter seek

In horrid wilds, and dens, and dreary caves,

And with their shaggy tenants share the spoil;

Or, if the savage hunters miss their prey,

From scatter'd acorns pick a scanty meal,—
Far from the sweet civilities of life; [dom:
There let him live, and vaunt his wretched free-
While we, obedient to the laws that guard us,
Guard them, and live or die as they decree.

Pub. With reverence and astonishment I hear thee!

Thy words, my father, have convinc'd my reason,
But cannot touch my heart;—nature denies
Obedience so repugnant. I'm a son.

Reg. A poor excuse, unworthy of a Roman!
Brutus, Virginius, Manlius—they were fathers.

Pub. 'Tis true, they were; but this heroic
This glorious elevation of the soul. [greatness,
Has been confin'd to fathers,—Rome, till now,
Boasts not a son of such unnatural virtue,
Who, spurning all the powerful ties of blood,
Has labour'd to procure his father's death.

Reg. Then be the first to give the great example—

Go, hasten, be thyself that son, my Publius.

Pub. My father, ah!

Reg. Publius, no more; begone—
Attend the senate—let me know my fate;
'Twill be more glorious if announc'd by thee.

Pub. Too much, too much, thy rigid virtue claims

From thy unhappy son. O nature, nature!

Reg. Publius! am I a stranger, or thy father?

In either case an obvious duty waits thee;

If thou regard'st me as an alien here,

Learn to prefer to mine the good of Rome;

If as a father—reverence my commands. [soul,

Pub. Ah! couldst thou look into my inmost

And see how warm it burns with love and duty,

Thou wouldst abate the rigour of thy words.

Reg. Could I explore the secrets of thy breast,

The virtue I would wish should flourish there

Were fortitude, not weak, complaining love.

Pub. If thou requir'st my blood, I'll shed it all;

But when thou dost enjoin the harsher task

That I should labour to procure thy death,

Forgive thy son—he has not so much virtue.

[Exit PUBLIUS.

Reg. Th' important hour draws on, and now my soul

Loses her wonted calmness, lest the senate

Should doubt what answer to return to Car-

O ye protecting deities of Rome! [thage.

Ye guardian gods! look down propitious on her,

Inspire her senate with your sacred wisdom,

And call up all that's Roman in their souls!

Enter MANLIUS (speaking).

See that the lictors wait, and guard the en-
Take care that none intrude. [trance—

Reg. Ah! Manlius here?

What can this mean?

Man. Where, where is Regulus?

The great, the godlike, the invincible!

Oh, let me strain the hero to my breast.—

Reg. (avoiding him.) Manlius, stand off, re-
member I'm a slave!

And thou Rome's consul.

Man. I am something more:

I am a man enamour'd of thy virtues;

Thy fortitude and courage have subdued me.

I was thy rival—I am now thy friend;

Allow me that distinction, dearer far
Than all the honours Rome can give without it.

Reg. This is the temper still of noble minds,
And these the blessings of an humble fortune.
Had I not been a *slave*, I ne'er had gain'd
The treasure of thy friendship.

Man. I confess,
Thy grandeur cast a veil before my eyes,
Which the reverse of fortune has remov'd.
Oft have I seen thee on the day of triumph,
A conqueror of nations, enter Rome;
Now, thou hast conquer'd *fortune* and *thyself*.
Thy laurels oft have mov'd my soul to envy,
Thy chains awaken my respect, my reverence;
Then *Regulus* appear'd a *hero* to me,
He rises now a god.

Reg. *Manlius*, enough.
Cease thy applause; 'tis dang'rous; praise like
thine

Might tempt the most severe and cautious virtue.
Bless'd be the gods, who gild my latter days
With the bright glory of the consul's friendship!

Man. Forbid it, *Jove*! saidst thou thy *latter*
days?

May gracious heav'n to a far distant hour
Protract thy valued life. Be it *my* care
To crown the hopes of thy admiring country,
By giving back her long-lost hero to her.
I will exert my power to bring about
Th' exchange of captives *Africa* proposes.

Reg. *Manlius*, and is it thus, is this the way
Thou dost begin to give me proofs of friendship?
Ah! if thy love be so destructive to me,
What would thy hatred be? Mistaken consul!
Shall I then lose the profit of my wrongs?

Be thus *defrauded* of the benefit
I vainly hoped from all my years of *bondage*?

I did not come to show my chains to Rome,
To move my country to a weak compassion;
I came to save her *honour*, to preserve her
From tarnishing her glory; came to snatch her
From offers so destructive to her fame.
O *Manlius*! either give me proofs more worthy
A Roman's friendship, or renew thy hate.

Man. Dost thou not know, that, this exchange
Inevitable death must be thy fate? [refus'd,

Reg. And has the name of *death* such terror
in it,

To strike with dread the mighty soul of *Manlius*?
'Tis not *to-day* I learn that I am mortal.

The foe can only take from *Regulus*
What wearied nature would have shortly yield-
It will be now a voluntary gift, [ed]

'Twould then become a tribute seiz'd, not offer'd.
Yes, *Manlius*, tell the world that as I lived
For Rome alone, when I could live no longer,
'Twas my last care how, dying, to assist,
To save that country I had lived to serve.

Man. O unexampled worth! O godlike *Reg-
ulus*!

Thrice happy Rome! unparalleled in heroes!
Hast thou then sworn, thou awfully good man!
Never to bless the consul with thy friendship?

Reg. If thou wilt love me, love me like a
Roman. [ship]

These are the terms on which I take thy friend-
We both must make a sacrifice to Rome,
I of my life, and thou of *Regulus*:

One must resign his being, one his friend.
It is but just, that what procures our country
Such real blessings, such substantial good,
Should cost thee something—I shall lose but
little.

Go then, my friend! but promise, ere thou goest,
With all the consular authority,
Thou wilt support my counsel in the senate.

If thou art willing to accept these terms, [ship.
With transport I embrace thy proffer'd friend-

Man. (after a pause.) Yes, I do promise.

Reg. Bounteous gods, I thank you!
Ye never gave, in all your round of blessing,
A gift so greatly welcome to my soul,

As *Manlius*' friendship on the terms of honour!
Man. Immortal Powers! why am not I a slave!

By heav'n! I almost envy thee thy bonds.

Reg. My friend! there's not a moment to be
lost;

Ere this, perhaps, the senate is assembled.
To thee, and to thy virtues, I commit
The dignity of Rome—my peace and honour.

Man. Illustrious man, farewell!

Reg. Farewell, my friend!

Man. The sacred flame thou hast kindled in
my soul

Glow in each vein, trembles in every nerve,
And raises me to something more than man.
My blood is fired with virtue, and with Rome,
And every pulse beats an alarm to glory.
Who would not spurn a sceptre when compar'd
With chains like thine? Thou man of every
virtue,

O farewell! may all the gods protect and bless
thee. [*Exit* *MANLIUS*.

Enter *LICINIUS*.

Reg. Now I begin to live: propitious Heaven
Inclines to favour me.—*Licinius* here?

Lic. With joy, my honour'd friend, I seek
thy presence.

Reg. And why with joy?

Lic. Because my heart once more
Beats high with flattering hope. In thy great
I have been labouring. [cause

Reg. Say'st thou in *my* cause?

Lic. In thine and Rome's. Does it excite
thy wonder?

Couldst thou then think so poorly of *Licinius*,
That base ingratitude could find a place
Within his bosom?—Can I then forget
Thy thousand acts of friendship to my youth?
Forget them too at that important moment
When most I might assist thee?—*Regulus*,
Thou wast my leader, general, father—all.
Didst thou not teach me early how to tread
The path of glory; point the way thyself,
And bid me follow thee?

Reg. But say, *Licinius*,
What hast thou done to serve me?

Lic. I have defended
Thy liberty and life!

Reg. Ah! speak—explain.—

Lic. Just as the fathers were about to meet,
I hasten'd to the temple—at the entrance
Their passage I retarded, by the force
Of strong entreaty; then address'd myself
So well to each, that I from each obtain'd

A declaration, that his utmost power
Should be exerted for thy life and freedom.

Reg. Great gods! what do I hear! Licinius too!

Lic. Not he alone; no, 'twere indeed unjust
To rob the fair Attilia of her claim
To tilial merit.—What I could, I did. [earth,
But *she*—thy charming daughter—heav'n and
What did she not, to save her father!

Reg. Who?

Lic. Attilia, thy belov'd—thy age's darling!
Was ever father bless'd with such a child!
Gods! how her looks took captive all who saw
How did her soothing eloquence subdue [her!
The stoutest hearts of Rome! How did she rouse
Contending passions in the breasts of all!
How sweetly temper dignity with grief!
With what a soft, inimitable grace, [sooth'd.
She prais'd, reproach'd, entreated, flatter'd,

Reg. What said the senators?

Lic. What could they say!
Who could resist the lovely conqueror!
See where she comes—Hope dances in her eyes,
And lights up all her beauties into smiles.

Enter ATTILIA.

Att. Once more, my dearest father—

Reg. Ah, presume not
To call me by that name. For know, Attilia,
I number thee among the foes of Regulus.

Att. What do I hear! thy foe! my father's
foe! [glory.

Reg. His worst of foes—the murd'rer of his
Att! Ah! is it then a proof of enmity
To wish thee all the good that gods can give thee,
To yield my life, if needful, for thy service!

Reg. Thou rash, imprudent girl! thou little
know'st

The dignity and weight of public cares.
Who made a weak and inexperienced woman
The arbiter of Regulus's fate!

Lic. For pity's sake, my Lord!

Reg. Peace, peace, young man!
Her silence better than thy language pleads.
That bears at least the semblance of repentance.
Immortal powers!—A daughter and a Roman!

Att. Because I am a daughter, I presume—

Lic. Because I am a Roman, I aspired
To oppose th' inhuman rigour of thy fate.

Reg. No more, Licinius. How can he be call'd
A Roman, who would live with infamy?
Or how can she be Regulus's daughter,
Whose coward mind wants fortitude and honour?
Unhappy children! now you make me feel
The burden of my chains: your feeble souls
Have made me know I am indeed a slave.

[*Exit REGULUS.*

Att. Tell me, Licinius, and oh! tell me truly,
If thou believ'st in all the round of time
There ever breath'd a maid so truly wretched!
To weep, to mourn, a father's cruel fate—
To love him with soul-rending tenderness—
To know no peace by day, or rest by night—
To bear a bleeding heart in this poor bosom,
Which aches and trembles but to think he suffers:
This is my crime—in any other child
'T would be a merit.

Lic. Oh! my best Attilia!

Do not repent thee of the pious deed:
It was a virtuous error. *That in us*
Is a just duty, which the godlike soul
Of Regulus would think a shameful weakness.
If the contempt of life in him be virtue,
It were in us a crime to let him perish.
Perhaps at last he may consent to live;
He then will thank us for our cares to save him:
Let not his anger fright thee. Though our love
Offend him now, yet, when his mighty soul
Is reconcil'd to life, he will not chide us.
The sick man loathes, and with reluctance takes
The remedy by which his health's restor'd.

Att. Licinius! his reproaches wound my soul.
I cannot live, and bear his indignation.

Lic. Would my Attilia rather lose her father
Than, by offending him, preserve his life!

Att. Ah! no. If he but live, I am contented.

Lic. Yes, he shall live, and we again be
bless'd:

Then dry thy tears, and let those lovely orbs
Beam with their wonted lustre on Licinius,
Who lives but in the sunshine of thy smiles.

[*Exit LICINIUS.*

Att. (alonc.) Oh Fortune, Fortune, thou capricious goddess!

Thy frowns and favours have alike no bounds;
Unjust or prodigal, in each extreme.
When thou wouldst humble human vanity,
By singling out a wretch to bear thy wrath,
Thou crushest him with anguish to excess;
If thou wouldst bless, thou mak'st the happiness
Too poignant for his giddy sense to bear.—
Immortal gods, who rule the fates of men,
Preserve my father! bless him, bless him,
heav'n!

If your avenging thunderbolts must fall,
Strike *here*—this bosom will invite the blow,
And *thank* you for it: but in mercy spare,
Oh! spare his sacred, venerable head;
Respect in *him* an image of yourselves;
And leave a world, who wants it, an example
Of courage, wisdom, constancy, and truth.

Yet if, Eternal Powers who rule this ball!
You have decreed that Regulus must fall;
Teach me to yield to your divine command,
And meekly bow to your correcting hand;
Contented to resign, or pleas'd receive,
What reason may withhold, or mercy give.

[*Exit ATTILIA.*

ACT IV.

SCENE—*Gallery in the Ambassador's Palace.*

Reg. (alonc.) Be calm my soul! what strange
emotions shake thee!

Emotions thou hast never felt till now.
Thou hast defied the dangers of the deep,
Th' impetuous hurricane, the thunder's roar,
And all the terrors of the various war;
Yet, now thou tremblest, fearful and dismay'd,
With anxious expectation of thy fate.—
Yes, thou hast amplest reason for thy fears;
For till this hour, so pregnant with events,
Thy fame and glory never were at stake.
Soft—let me think—what is this thing called
glory!

'Tis the soul's tyrant, that should be dethron'd,
And learn subjection like her other passions

Ah no! 'tis false: this is the coward's plea;
 The lazy language of refining vice.
 That man was born in vain, whose wish to serve
 Is circumscribed within the wretched bounds
 Of *self*—a narrow, miserable sphere!
 Glory exalts, enlarges, dignifies,
 Absorbs the *selfish* in the *social* claims,
 And renders man a blessing to mankind.—
 It is this principle, this spark of deity,
 Rescues debased humanity from guilt,
 And elevates it by her strong excitements.—
 It takes off sensibility from pain, [death;
 From peril, fear; plucks out the sting from
 Changes ferocious into gentle manners;
 And teaches men to imitate the gods.
 It shows,—but see, alas! where Publius comes.
 Ah! he advances with a downcast eye,
 And step irresolute.—

Enter PUBLIUS.

Reg. My Publius, welcome!
 What tidings dost thou bring? What says the
 senate?

Is yet my fate determin'd? quickly tell me.—

Pub. I cannot speak, and yet, alas! I must.

Reg. Tell me the whole.—

Pub. Would I were rather dumb?

Reg. Publius, no more delay:—I charge thee
 speak. [part.

Pub. The senate has decreed you shall de-

Reg. Blest spirit of Rome! thou hast at last
 prevail'd—

I thank the gods, I have not lived in vain!

Where is Hamilcar!—find him—let us go,

For Regulus has naught to do in Rome;

I have accomplish'd her important work,

And must depart.

Pub. Ah, my unhappy father!

Reg. Unhappy, Publius! didst thou say *unhappy*?

Does he, does that blest man deserve this name,
 Who to his latest breath can serve his country?

Pub. Like thee, my father, I adore my
 country,

Yet weep with anguish o'er thy cruel chains.

Reg. Dost thou not know that *life's* a slavery?

The body is the chain that binds the soul;

A yoke that every mortal must endure.

Wouldst thou lament—lament the general fate,

The chain that nature gives, entail'd on all,

Not these I wear.

Pub. Forgive, forgive my sorrows:

I know, alas! too well, those fell barbarians

Intend thee instant death.

Reg. So shall my life

And servitude together have an end.—

Publius, farewell! nay, do not follow me.

Pub. Alas! my father, if thou ever lov'dst

Refuse me not the mournful consolation [me,

To pay the last sad offices of duty

I e'er can show thee.—

Reg. No!—thou canst fulfil

Thy duty to thy father in a way

More grateful to him: I must straight embark.

Be it meanwhile thy pious care to keep

My lov'd Attilia from a sight, I fear,

Would rend her gentle heart. Her tears, my son,

Would dim the glories of thy father's triumph.

Her sinking spirits are subdued by grief,
 And, should her sorrows pass the bounds of rea-
 Publius, have pity on her tender age; [son,
 Compassionate the weakness of her sex;
 We must not hope to find in *her* soft soul
 The strong exertion of a manly courage.—
 Support her fainting spirit, and instruct her,
 By thy example, how a Roman ought
 To bear misfortune. O, indulge her weakness!
 And be to her the father she will lose.
 I leave my daughter to thee—I do more—
 I leave to thee the conduct of—thyself.
 —Ah, Publius! I perceive thy courage fails—
 I see the quivering lip, the starting tear;—
 That lip, that tear calls down my mounting soul.
 Resume thyself—oh! do not blast my hope!
 Yes—I'm composed—thou wilt not mock my
 age—

Thou art—thou art a *Roman*—and my son.

[Exit.

Pub. And is he gone?—now be thyself, my
 soul—

Hard is the conflict, but the triumph glorious.

Yes,—I must conquer these too tender feelings;

The blood that fills these veins demands it of

My father's great example, too, requires it. [me;

Forgive me, *Rome*, and *glory*, if I yielded

To nature's strong attack:—I must subdue it.

Now, Regulus, I *feel* I am thy son.

Enter ATTILIA and BARCE.

Att. My brother, I'm distracted, wild with
 fear—

Tell me, O tell me, what I dread to know—

Is it, then, true?—I cannot speak—my father?

Bar. May we believe the fatal news?

Pub. Yes, Barce.

It is determin'd. Regulus must go.

Att. Immortal powers!—What say'st thou?

Bar. Can it be?

Thou canst not mean it.

Att. Then you've all betrayed me.

Pub. Thy grief avails not.

Enter HAMILCAR and LICINIUS.

Bar. Pity us, Hamilcar!

Att. Oh, help, Licinius, help the lost Attilia!

Ham. My Barce! there's no hope.

Lic. Ah! my fair mourner,

All's lost!

Att. What, all, Licinius? saidst thou all?

Not one poor glimpse of comfort left behind?

Tell me at least where Regulus is gone:

The daughter shall partake the father's chains,

And share the woes she knew not to prevent.

[Going.

Pub. What would thy wild despair? Attilia,
 stay,

Thou must not follow; this excess of grief

Would much offend him.

Att. Dost thou hope to stop me?

Pub. I hope thou wilt resume thy better self.

And recollect thy father will not bear—

Att. I only recollect I am a *daughter*,

A poor, defenceless, helpless, wretched daugh-

ter! Away—and let me follow.

Pub. No, my sister.

Att. Detain me not—Ah! while thou hold'st me here,

He goes, and I shall never see him more.

Bar. My friend, be comforted, he cannot go whilst here Hamilcar stays.

Att. O, Barce, Barce!

Who will advise, who comfort, who assist me?

Hamilcar, pity me.—Thou wilt not answer!

Ham. Rage and astonishment divide my soul.

Att. Licinius, wilt thou not relieve my sorrows?

Lic. Yes, at my life's expense, my heart's Wouldst thou instruct me how. [best treasure,

Att. My brother, too—

Ah! look with mercy on thy sister's woes!

Pub. I will at least instruct thee how to bear them.

My sister—yield thee to thy adverse fate;

Think of thy father, think of Regulus;

Has he not taught thee how to brave misfortune?

'Tis but by following his illustrious steps

Thou e'er canst merit to be call'd his daughter.

Att. And is it thus thou dost advise thy sister?

Are these, ye gods, the feelings of a son?

Indifference here becomes impiety—

Thy savage heart ne'er felt the dear delights

Of filial tenderness—the thousand joys

That flow from blessing and from being bless'd!

No—distant thou love thy father as I love him,

Our kindred souls would be in unison;

And all my sighs be echoed back by thine.

Thou wouldst—alas!—I know not what I say.—

Forgive me, Publius,—but, indeed, my brother, I do not understand this cruel coldness.

Ham. Thou mayst not—but I understand it His mighty soul, full as to thee it seems [well.

Of Rome and glory—is enamour'd—caught—

Enraptur'd with the beauties of fair Barce.—

She stays behind, if Regulus departs.

Behold the cause of all the well-feign'd virtue

Of this mock patriot—curst dissimulation!

Pub. And canst thou entertain such vile suspicions?

Gods! what an outrage to a son like me.

Ham. Yes, Roman: now I see thee as thou Thy naked soul divested of its veil, [art,

Its specious colouring, its dissembled virtues:

Thou hast plotted with the senate to prevent

Th' exchange of captives. All thy subtle arts,

Thy smooth inventions, have been set to work—

The base refinements of your polish'd land.

Pub. In truth the doubt is worthy of an African. (Contemptuously.)

Ham. I know—

Pub. Peace, Carthaginian, peace, and hear

Didst thou not know, that on the very man [me,

Thou hast insulted, Barce's fate depends?

Ham. Too well I know, the cruel chance of war

Gave her, a blooming captive, to thy mother;

Who, dying, left the beauteous prize to thee.

Pub. Now, see the use a Roman makes of power.

Heav'n is my witness how I lov'd the maid!

O she was dearer to my soul than light!

Dear as the vital stream that feeds my heart!

But know, my honour's dearer than my love.

I do not even hope thou wilt believe me;

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Thy brutal soul, as savage as thy clime,
Can never taste those elegant delights,
Those pure refinements, love and glory yield.

'Tis not to thee I stoop for vindication,

Alike to me thy friendship or thy hate;

But to remove from others a pretence

For branding Publius with the name of villain;

That they may see no sentiment but honour

Informs this bosom.—Barce, thou art free.

Thou hast my leave with him to quit this shore.

Now learn, barbarian, how a Roman loves. [Exit.

Bar. He cannot mean it!

Ham. Oh, exalted virtue!

Which challenges esteem, though from a foe.

(Looking after Publius.)

Att. Ah! cruel Publius, wilt thou leave me

Thus leave thy sister? [thus!

Bar. Didst thou hear, Hamilcar?

Oh! didst thou hear the godlike youth resign me!

(Hamilcar and Licinius seem lost in thought.)

Ham. Farewell, I will return.

Lic. Farewell, my love! (to Attilia.)

Bar. Hamilcar, where—

Att. Alas! where art thou going?

(to Licinius.)

Lic. If possible, to save the life of Regulus.

Att. But by what means?—Ah! how canst thou effect it?

Lic. Since the disease so desperate is become, We must apply a desperate remedy.

Ham. (after a long pause.) Yes, I will mortify this generous foe;

I'll be reveng'd upon this stubborn Roman;

Not by defiance bold, or feats of arms,

But by a means more sure to work its end;

By emulating his exalted worth,

And showing him a virtue like his own;

Such a refin'd revenge as noble minds

Alone can practise, and alone can feel.

Att. If thou wilt go, Licinius, let Attilia

At least go with thee.

Lic. No, my gentle love,

Too much I prize thy safety and thy peace.

Let me entreat thee, stay with Barce here

Till our return.

Att. Then, ere ye go, in pity

Explain the latent purpose of your souls.

Lic. Soon shalt thou know it all—Farewell! farewell!

Let us keep Regulus in Rome or die.

(to Hamilcar as he goes out.)

Ham. Yes.—These smooth, polish'd Romans, shall confess

The soil of Afric too produces heroes. [theirs,

What, though our pride perhaps be less than

Our virtue may be equal: they shall own

The path of honour's not unknown to Carthage,

Nor, as they arrogantly think, confin'd

To their proud capitol:—Yes, they shall learn

The gods look down on other climes than theirs.

[Exit.

Att. What! gone, both gone! What can I think or do?

Licinius leaves me, led by love and virtue,

To rouse the citizens to war and tumult,

Which may be fatal to himself and Rome,

And yet, alas! not serve my dearest father.

Protecting deities! preserve them both!

Bar. Nor is thy Barce more at ease, my friend ;
I dread the fierceness of Hamilcar's courage ;
Rous'd by the grandeur of thy brother's deed,
And stung by his reproaches, his great soul
Will scorn to be outdone by him in glory.
Yet, let us rise to courage and to life,
Forget the weakness of our helpless sex,
And mount above these coward woman's fears.
Hope dawns upon my mind—my prospect clears,
And every cloud now brightens into day.

Att. How different are our souls ! Thy sanguine temper,

Flush'd with the native vigour of thy soil,
Supports thy spirits ; while the sad Attilia,
Sinking with more than all her sex's fears,
Sees not a beam of hope ; or, if she sees it,
'Tis not the bright, warm splendour of the sun ;
It is a sickly and uncertain glimmer
Of instantaneous lightning, passing by.
It shows, but not diminishes the danger,
And leaves my poor benighted soul as dark
As it had never shone.

Bar. Come, let us go.
Yes, joys unlook'd for now shall gild thy days,
And brighter suns reflect propitious rays.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—A Hall looking towards the Garden.

Enter REGULUS, speaking to one of HAMILCAR'S attendants.

Where's your ambassador ! where is Hamilcar !
Ere this he doubtless knows the senate's will.
Go seek him out—tell him we must depart—
Rome has no hope for him, or wish for me.
Longer delay were criminal in both.

Enter MANLIUS.

Reg. He comes. The consul comes ! my noble friend !

O let me strain thee to this grateful heart,
And thank thee for the vast, vast debt, I owe thee !

But for thy friendship I had been a wretch—
Had been compell'd to shameful liberty.

To thee I owe the glory of these chains,
My faith inviolate, my fame preserv'd,
My honour, virtue, glory, bondage,—all !

Man. But we shall lose thee, so it is decreed—
Thou must depart !

Reg. Because I must depart
You will not lose me ; I were lost indeed
Did I remain in Rome.

Man. Ah ! Regulus,
Why, why so late do I begin to love thee !
Alas ! why have the adverse fates decreed,
I ne'er must give thee other proofs of friendship,
Than those, so fatal, and so full of woe !

Reg. Thou hast perform'd the duties of a friend ;

Of a just, faithful, true, and noble friend :
Yet, generous as thou art, if thou constrain me
To sink beneath a weight of obligation,
I could—yes, Manlius—I could ask still more.

Man. Explain thyself.

Reg. I think I have fulfill'd
The various duties of a citizen ;
Nor have I aught beside to do for Rome.
Now, nothing for the public good remains.

Manlius, I recollect I am a father !

My Publius ! my Attilia ! ah ! my friend,
They are—(forgive the weakness of a parent)
To my fond heart dear as the drops that warm it.
Next to my country, they're my all of life ;
And, if a weak old man be not deceiv'd,
They will not shame that country. Yes, my
The love of virtue blazes in their souls. [friend,
As yet these tender plants are immature,
And ask the fostering hand of cultivation :
Heav'n in its wisdom would not let their father
Accomplish this great work.—To thee, my friend,
The tender parent delegates the trust :
Do not refuse a poor man's legacy ;
I do bequeath my orphans to thy love—
If thou wilt kindly take them to thy bosom,
Their loss will be repaid with usury.
O, let the father owe his glory to thee,
The children their protection !

Man. Regulus,
With grateful joy my heart accepts the trust ;
Oh ! I will shield with jealous tenderness,
The precious blossoms from a blasting world.
In me thy children shall possess a father,
Though not as worthy, yet as fond as thee.
The pride be mine to fill their youthful breasts
With every virtue—'twill not cost me much :
I shall have naught to teach, nor they to learn,
But the great history of their godlike sire.

Reg. I will not hurt the grandeur of thy virtue,
By paying thee so poor a thing as thanks.
Now all is over, and, I bless the gods,
I've nothing more to do.

Enter PUBLIUS in haste.

Pub. O Regulus !

Reg. Say what has happen'd !

Pub. Rome is in a tumult—
There's scarce a citizen but runs to arms—
They will not let thee go.

Reg. Is't possible ?
Can Rome so far forget her dignity
As to desire this infamous exchange ?
I blush to think it !

Pub. Ah ! not so, my father.
Rome cares not for the peace, nor for th' ex-
She only wills that Regulus shall stay. [change ;

Reg. How, stay ! my oath—my faith—my
Do they forget ? [honour ! ah !

Pub. No : Every man exclaims,
That neither faith nor honour should be kept
With Carthaginian perfidy and fraud.

Reg. Gods ! gods ! on what vile principles
they reason !

Can guilt in Carthage palliate guilt in Rome,
Or vice in one absolve it in another !
Ah ! who hereafter shall be criminal,
If precedents are used to justify
The blackest crimes ?

Pub. Th' insatuated people
Have called the augurs to the sacred fane,
There to determine this momentous point.

Reg. I have no need of oracles, my son ;
Honour's the oracle of honest men.

I gave my promise, which I will observe
With most religious strictness. Rome, 'tis true,
Had power to choose the peace, or change of
But whether Regulus return or not, [slaves ;

Is his concern, not the concern of Rome.

That was a public, this a private care.

Publius! thy father is not what he was;

I am the slave of Carthage, nor has Rome

Power to dispose of captives not her own.

Guards! let us to the port.—Farewell, my friend. [thou go

Man. Let me entreat thee stay; for shouldst

To stem this tumult of the populace,

They will by force detain thee: then, alas!

Both Regulus and Rome must break their faith.

Reg. What! must I then remain?

Man. No, Regulus,

I will not check thy great career of glory:

Thou shalt depart; meanwhile, I'll try to calm

This wild, tumultuous uproar of the people.

The consular authority shall still them.

Reg. Thy virtue is my safeguard—but—

Man. Enough.—

I know thy honour, and trust thou to mine.

I am a Roman, and I feel some sparks

Of Regulus's virtue in my breast.

Though fate denies me thy illustrious chains,

I will at least endeavour to deserve them.

[Exit.

Reg. How is my country alter'd! how, alas,

Is the great spirit of old Rome extinct!

Restraint and force must now be put to use,

To make her virtuous. She must be compell'd

To faith and honour.—Ah! what, Publius here?

And dost thou leave so tamely to my friend

The honour to assist me? Go, my boy,

'Twill make me more in love with chains and

To owe them to a son. [death,

Pub. I go, my father—

I will, I will obey thee.

Reg. Do not sigh—

One sigh will check the progress of thy glory.

Pub. Yes, I will own the pangs of death itself

Would be less cruel than these agonies:

Yet do not frown austere on thy son:

His anguish is his virtue: if to conquer

The feelings of my soul were easy to me,

'Twould be no merit. Do not then defraud

The sacrifice I make thee of its worth.

[Exeunt severally.

MANLIUS, ATTILIA.

Att. (speaking as she enters.) Where is the

consul?—where, oh! where is Manlius?

I come to breathe the voice of mourning to him;

I come to crave his mercy, to conjure him

To whisper peace to my afflicted bosom,

And heal the anguish of a wounded spirit.

Man. What would the daughter of my noble

friend? [touch'd thee,—

Att. (kneeling.) If ever pity's sweet emotions

If ever gentle love assail'd thy breast—

If ever virtuous friendship fir'd thy soul—

By the dear names of husband and of parent—

By all the soft yet powerful ties of nature—

If e'er thy lisping infants charm'd thine ear,

And waken'd all the father in thy soul,—

If e'er thou hop'dst to have thy latter days

Bless'd by their love, and sweeten'd by their

duty— [ter,

Oh! hear a kneeling, weeping, wretched daughter

Who begs a father's life—nor hers alone,

But Rome's—his country's father.

Man. Gentle maid!

Oh! spare this soft, subduing eloquence!—

Nay, rise. I shall forget I am a Roman—

Forget the mighty debt I owe my country—

Forget the fame and glory of thy father.

I must conceal this weakness. (turns from her.)

Att. (rises eagerly.) Ah! you weep!

Indulge, indulge, my lord, the virtuous softness:

Was ever sight so graceful, so becoming,

As pity's tear upon the hero's cheek? [ing.)

Man. No more—I must not hear thee. (go-

Att. How! not hear me! [lord—

You must—you shall—nay, nay, return, my

Oh! fly not from me—look upon my woes,

And imitate the mercy of the gods:

'Tis not their thunder that excites our reverence,

'Tis their mild mercy and forgiving love.

'Twill add a brighter lustre to thy laurels,

When men shall say, and proudly point thee out,

"Behold the consul!—he whosav'd his friend."

Oh! what a tide of joy will overwhelm thee!

Who will not envy thee thy glorious feelings?

Man. Thy father scorns his liberty and life,

Nor will accept of either, at th' expense

Of honour, virtue, glory, faith, and Rome.

Att. Think you behold the godlike Regulus;

The prey of unrelenting, savage foes,

Ingenious only in contriving ill:—

Eager to glut their hunger of revenge,

They'll plot such new, such dire, unheard-of

tortures—

Such dreadful and such complicated vengeance,

As e'en the Punic annals have not known;

And, as they heap fresh torments on his head,

They'll glory in their genius for destruction.

Ah! Manlius—now methinks I see my father—

My faithful fancy, full of his idea, [torn—

Presents him to me—mangled, gash'd, and

Stretch'd on the rack in writhing agony—

The torturing pincers tear his quivering flesh,

While the dire murderers smile upon his

wounds—

His groans their music, and his pangs their sport.

And if they lend some interval of ease,

Some dearbought intermission, meant to make

The following pang more exquisitely felt,

Th' insulting executioners exclaim, [scorn'd!"]

"Now, Roman! feel the vengeance thou hast

Man. Repress thy sorrows—

Att. Can the friend of Regulus

Advise his daughter not to mourn his fate?

How cold, alas! is friendship, when compar'd

To ties of blood—to nature's powerful impulse!

Yes—she asserts her empire in my soul;

'Tis nature pleads—she will—she must be

heard;

With warm, resistless eloquence, she pleads.

Ah, thou art soften'd!—see—the consul yields—

The feelings triumph—tenderness prevails—

The Roman is subdued—the daughter con-

quers! (catching hold of his robe.)

Man. Ah! hold me not—I must not, cannot

The softness of thy sorrow be contagious; [stay,

I too may feel, when I should only reason.

I dare not hear thee—Regulus and Rome,

The patriot and the friend—all, all forbid it.

(breaks from her, and exit.)

Att. Oh feeble grasp!—and is he gone, quite gone?

Hold, hold thy empire, reason, firmly hold it,
Or rather quit at once thy feeble throne,
Since thou but serv'st to show me what I've lost,
To heighten all the horrors that await me;
To summon up a wild, distracted crowd
Of fatal images, to shake my soul,
To scare sweet peace, and banish hope itself.
Farewell! delusive dreams of joy, farewell!
Come, fell despair! thou pale-eyed spectre,
For thou shalt be Attilia's inmate now, [come,
And thou shalt grow, and twine about her heart,
And she shall be so much enamour'd of thee,
The pageant pleasure ne'er shall interpose
Her gaudy presence to divide you more.

(stands in an attitude of silent grief.)

Enter LICINIUS.

Lic. At length I've found thee—ah, my charming maid! [fondness!
How have I sought thee out with anxious
Alas! she hears me not. My best Attilia!
Ah! grief oppresses every gentle sense.
Still, still she hears not—'tis Licinius speaks,
He comes to sooth the anguish of thy spirit,
And hush thy tender sorrows into peace.

Att. Who's he that dares assume the voice of love,

And comes unbidden to these dreary haunts?
Steals on the sacred treasury of wo,
And breaks the league despair and I have made?

Lic. 'Tis one who comes the messenger of Heaven,
To talk of peace, of comfort, and of joy.

Att. Didst thou not mock me with the sound of joy?

Thou little know'st the anguish of my soul,
If thou believ'st I ever can again,
So long the wretched sport of angry fortune,
Admit delusive hope to my sad bosom.
No—I abjure the flatterer and her train.
Let those who ne'er have been like me deceiv'd,
Embrace the fair, fantastic sycophant—
For I, alas! am wedded to despair,
And will not hear the sound of comfort more.

Lic. Cease, cease, my love, this tender voice of wo,

Though softer than the dying cygnet's plaint:
She ever chants her most melodious strain
When death and sorrow harmonize her note.

Att. Yes, I will listen now with fond delight;
For death and sorrow are my darling themes.
Well!—what hast thou to say of death and sorrow?

Believe me, thou wilt find me apt to listen,
And, if my tongue be slow to answer thee,
Instead of words I'll give thee sighs and tears.

Lic. I come to dry thy tears, not make them flow;

The gods, once more propitious, smile upon us,
Joy shall again await each happy morn,
And ever-new delight shall crown the day!
Yes, Regulus shall live.

Att. Ah, me! what say'st thou?
Alas! I'm but a poor, weak, trembling woman—I
I cannot bear these wild extremes of fate—
Then mock me not. I think thou art Licinius,

The generous lover, and the faithful friend!
I think thou wouldst not sport with my afflictions.

Lic. Mock thy afflictions! May eternal Jove,
And every power at whose dread shrine we wor-
Blast all the hopes my fond ideas form, [ship,
If I deceive thee! Regulus shall live,
Shall live to give thee to Licinius' arms.
Oh! we will smooth his downward path of life,
And after a long length of virtuous years,
At the last verge of honourable age,
When nature's glimmering lamp goes gently out,
We'll close, together close, his eyes in peace,
Together drop the sweetly-painful tear,
Then copy out his virtues in our lives.

Att. And shall we be so blest! is't possible?
Forgive me, my Licinius, if I doubt thee.

Fate never gave such exquisite delight
As flattering hope hath imaged to thy soul.
But how! Explain this bounty of the gods.

Lic. Thou know'st what influence the name of tribune

Gives its possessor o'er the people's minds:
That power I have exerted, nor in vain;
All are prepar'd to second my designs:
The plot is ripe—there's not a man but swears
To keep thy godlike father here in Rome—
To save his life at hazard of his own.

Att. By what gradation does my joy ascend!
I thought that if my father had been sav'd
By any means, I had been rich in bliss:
But that he lives, and lives preserv'd by thee,
Is such a prodigality of fate,

I cannot bear my joy with moderation:
Heaven should have dealt it with a scantier
hand, [on me;
And not have shower'd such plenteous blessings
They are too great, too flattering, to be real;
'Tis some delightful vision which enchants
And cheats my senses, weaken'd by misfortune.

Lic. We'll seek thy father, and, meanwhile,
my fair, [him.

Compose thy sweet emotions ere thou see'st
Pleasure itself is painful in excess;
For joys, like sorrows, in extreme, oppress:
The gods themselves our pious cares approve,
And, to reward our virtue, crown our love

ACT V.

*An Apartment in the Ambassador's palace—
Guards and other attendants seen at a distance.*

Ham. Where is this wondrous man, this matchless hero,

This arbiter of kingdoms and of kings,
This delegate of Heaven, this Roman god?
I long to show his soaring mind an equal,
And bring it to the standard of humanity.
What pride, what glory will it be, to fix
An obligation on his stubborn soul!
Oh! to constrain a foe to be obliged!
The very thought exalts me e'en to rapture.

Enter REGULUS and Guards.

Ham. Well, Regulus! At last—
Reg. I know it all;

I know the motive of thy just complaint—
Be not alarm'd at this licentious uproar

Of the mad populace. I will depart—
Fear not ; I will not stay in Rome alive.

Ham. What dost thou mean by uproar and
alarms !

Hamilcar does not come to vent complaints ;
He rather comes to prove, that Afric too
Produces heroes, and that Tiber's banks
May find a rival on the Punic coast. [bates :

Reg. Be it so.—'Tis not a time for vain de-
Collect thy people.—Let us straight depart.

Ham. Lend me thy hearing first.

Reg. O patience, patience !

Ham. It is esteem'd a glory to be grateful !

Reg. The time has been when 'twas a duty
But 'tis a duty now so little practis'd, [only,
That to perform it is become a glory.

Ham. If to fulfil it should expose to danger ?—

Reg. It rises then to an illustrious virtue.

Ham. Then grant this merit to an African.

Give me a patient hearing.—Thy great son,
As delicate in honour as in love,
Hath nobly given my Barce to my arms ;
And yet I know he dotes upon the maid.
I come to emulate the generous deed ;
He gave me back my love, and in return
I will restore his father.

Reg. Ah ! what say'st thou ?
Wilt thou preserve me, then ?

Ham. I will.

Reg. But how ?

Ham. By leaving thee at liberty to fly.

Reg. Ah ! [tence,

Ham. I will dismiss my guards on some pre-
Meanwhile do thou escape, and lie conceal'd :
I will affect a rage I shall not feel,
Unmoor my ships, and sail for Africa.

Reg. Abhor'd barbarian !

Ham. Well, what dost thou say ?
Art thou not much surpris'd ?

Reg. I am indeed.

Ham. Thou couldst not then have hoped it ?

Reg. No ! I could not.

Ham. And yet I'm not a Roman.

Reg. (smiling contemptuously.) I perceive it.

Ham. You may retire. (aloud to the guards.)

Reg. No !—Stay, I charge you, stay.

Ham. And wherefore stay ?

Reg. I thank thee for thy offer,
But I shall go with thee.

Ham. 'Tis well, proud man !
Thou dost despise me, then ?

Reg. No, but I pity thee.

Ham. Why pity me ?

Reg. Because thy poor, dark soul,
Hath never felt the piercing ray of virtue.
Know, African ! the scheme thou dost propose
Would injure me, thy country, and thyself.

Ham. Thou dost mistake.

Reg. Who was it gave thee power
To rule the destiny of Regulus !
Am I a slave to Carthage, or to thee ?

Ham. What does it signify from whom, proud
Thou dost receive this benefit ? [Roman,

Reg. A benefit !

O, savage ignorance ! is it a benefit

To lie, elope, deceive, and be a villain ?

Ham. What ! not when life itself, when all's
at stake !

Know'st thou my countrymen prepare thee tor-
'That shock imagination but to think of ? [tures
Thou wilt be mangled, butcher'd, rack'd, im-
Goes not thy nature shrink ? [paled.

Reg. (smiling at his threats.) Hamilcar ! no.
Dost thou not know the Roman genius better !
We live on honour—'tis our food, our life,
The motive and the measure of our deeds !
We look on death as on a common object ;
The tongue nor falters, nor the cheek turns pale,
Nor the calm eye is moved at sight of him :
We court, and we embrace him, undismay'd ;
We smile at tortures if they lead to glory,
And only cowardice and guilt appal us.

Ham. Fine sophistry ! the valour of the tongue,
The heart disclaims it ; leave this pomp of words,
And cease dissembling with a friend like me.
I know that life is dear to all who live,
That death is dreadful,—yes, and must be fear'd,
E'en by the frozen apathists of Rome.

Reg. Did I fear death, when, on Bagrada's
banks,

I faced and slew the formidable serpent
That made your boldest Africans recoil,
And shrink with horror, though the monster liv'd
A native inmate of their own parch'd deserts !
Did I fear death before the gates of Adis ?—
Ask Bostar, or let Asdrubal confess.

Ham. Or shall I rather of Xantippus ask,
Who dar'd to undeece deluded Rome,
And prove this vaunter not invincible ?
'Tis even said, in Africa I mean,
He made a prisoner of this demi-god.—
Did we not triumph then ?

Reg. Vain boaster ! no.
No Carthaginian conquer'd Regulus ;
Xantippus was a Greek—a brave one, too :
Yet what distinction did your Afric make
Between the man who serv'd her and her foe ?
I was the object of her open hate :
He, of her secret, dark malignity.
He durst not trust the nation he had sav'd ;
He knew, and therefore fear'd you.—Yes, he
knew

Where once you were obliged, you ne'er forgave.
Could you forgive at all, you'd rather pardon
The man who hated, than the man who serv'd you.
Xantippus found his ruin ere it reach'd him,
Lurking behind your honours and rewards,
Found it in your feign'd courtesies and fawnings.
When vice intends to strike a master stroke,
Its veil is smiles, its language protestations.
The Spartan's merit threaten'd, but his service
Compell'd his ruin.—Both you could not pardon.

Ham. Come, come, I know full well—

Reg. Barbarian ! peace.
I've heard too much—Go, call thy followers ;
Prepare thy ships, and learn to do thy duty.

Ham. Yes !—show thyself intrepid, and in-
sult me ;
Call mine the blindness of barbarian friendship.
On Tiber's banks I hear thee, and am calm :
But know, thou scornful Roman ! that too soon
In Carthage thou mayst fear and feel my ven-
geance :

Thy cold, obdurate pride shall there confess,
Though Rome may talk—'tis Africa can punish.

[Exit.

Reg. Farewell! I've not a thought to waste on thee.

Where is the consul? why does Publius stay?
Alas! I fear—but see, Attilia comes.

Enter ATTILIA.

Reg. What brings thee here, my child? what eager joy

Transports thee thus?

Att. I cannot speak—my father!
Joy chokes my utterance—Rome, dear, grateful Rome

(Oh! may her cup with blessings overflow),
Gives up our common destiny to thee; [her,
Faithful and constant to th' advice thou gav'st
She will not hear of peace, or change of slaves,
But she insists—reward and bless her, gods!—
That thou shalt here remain.

Reg. What! with the shame—

Att. Oh! no—the sacred senate hath considered [faith,
That, when to Carthage thou didst pledge thy
Thou wast a captive, and that, being such,
Thou couldst not bind thyself in covenant.

Reg. He who can die is always free, my child!

Learn farther, he who owns another's strength
Confesses his own weakness. Let them know,
I swore I would return because I chose it,
And will return, because I swore to do it.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. Vain is that hope, my father.

Reg. Who shall stop me?

Pub. All Rome.—The citizens are up in arms:

In vain would reason stop the growing torrent;
In vain wouldst thou attempt to reach the port,
The way is barr'd by thronging multitudes:
The other streets of Rome are all deserted.

Reg. Where, where is Manlius?

Pub. He is still thy friend;
His single voice opposes a whole people;
He threatens this moment, and the next entreats,
But all in vain; none hear him, none obey.
The general fury rises e'en to madness.
The axes tremble in the lictors' hands,
Who, pale and spiritless, want power to use them—

And one wild scene of anarchy prevails.

Reg. Farewell! my daughter. Publius, follow me.

Att. Ah! where? I tremble—
(*detaining REGULUS.*)

Reg. To assist my friend—

T' upraid my hapless country with her crime—
To keep unstain'd the glory of these chains—
To go, or perish.

Att. Oh! have mercy!

Reg. Hold;
I have been patient with thee; have indulg'd
Too much the fond affections of thy soul;
It is enough; thy grief would now offend
Thy father's honour; do not let thy tears
Conspire with Rome to rob me of my triumph.

Att. Alas! it wounds my soul.

Reg. I know it does.
I know 'twill grieve thy gentle heart to lose me;

But think thou mak'st the sacrifice to Rome,
And all is well again.

Att. Alas! my father,

In aught beside—

Reg. What wouldst thou do, my child?
Canst thou direct the destiny of Rome,
And boldly plead amid th' assembled senate?
Canst thou, forgetting all thy sex's softness,
Fiercely engage in hardy deeds of arms?
Canst thou encounter labour, toil, and famine,
Fatigue and hardships, watchings, cold and heat?
Canst thou attempt to serve thy country thus?
Thou canst not:—but thou mayst sustain my
Without these agonizing pangs of grief, [loss
And set a bright example of submission,
Worthy a Roman's daughter.

Att. Yet such fortitude—

Reg. Is a most painful virtue;—but Attilia
Is Regulus's daughter, and must have it.

Att. I will entreat the gods to give it me.

Ah! thou art offended! I have lost thy love.

Reg. Is this concern a mark that thou hast lost it!

I cannot, cannot spurn my weeping child.
Receive this proof of my paternal fondness;—
Thou lov'st Licinius—he too loves my daughter.
I give thee to his wishes; I do more—
I give thee to his virtues.—Yes, Attilia,
The noble youth deserves this dearest pledge
Thy father's friendship ever can bestow.

Att. My lord! my father! wilt thou, canst thou leave me?

The tender father will not quit his child!

Reg. I am, I am thy father! as a proof,
I leave thee my example how to suffer.
My child! I have a heart within this bosom;
That heart has passions—see in what we differ;

Passion—which is thy tyrant—is my slave.

Att. Ah! stay, my father. Ah!

Reg. Farewell! farewell! [*Exit.*

Att. Yes, Regulus! I feel thy spirit here,
Thy mighty spirit, struggling in this breast.
And it shall conquer all these coward feelings,
It shall subdue the woman in my soul;
A Roman virgin should be something more—
Should dare above her sex's narrow limits—
And I will dare—and mis'ry shall assist me—
My father! I will be indeed thy daughter!
The hero shall no more disdain his child;
Attilia shall not be the only branch
That yields dishonour to the parent tree.

Enter BARCE.

Bar. Attilia! is it true that Regulus,
In spite of senate, people, augurs, friends,
And children, will depart?

Att. Yes, it is true.

Bar. Oh! what romantic madness!

Att. You forget—
Barce! the deeds of heroes claim respect.

Bar. Dost thou approve a virtue which must lead

To chains, to tortures, and to certain death?

Att. *Barce!* those chains, those tortures, and
Will be his triumph. [that death,

Bar. Thou art pleas'd, Attilia;
By heav'n, thou dost exult in his destruction!

Att. Ah! pitying powers. (*weeps.*)

Bar. I do not comprehend thee.

Att. No, Barce, I believe it.—Why, how shouldst thou!

If I mistake not, thou wast born in Carthage;
In a barbarian land, where never child
Was taught to triumph in a father's chains.

Bar. Yet thou dost weep—thy tears at least are honest,

For they refuse to share thy tongue's deceit;
They speak the genuine language of affliction,
And tell the sorrows that oppress thy soul.

Att. Grief, that dissolves in tears, relieves the heart.

When congregated vapours melt in rain,
The sky is calm'd, and all's serene again.

[*Exit.*

Bar. Why, what a strange, fantastic land is this!

This love of glory's the disease of Rome;
It makes her mad, it is a wild delirium,
A universal and contagious phrensy;
It preys on all, it spares nor sex nor age:
The consul envies Regulus his chains—[dom—
He, not less mad, contemns his life and free—
The daughter glories in the father's ruin—
And Publius, more distracted than the rest,
Resigns the object that his soul adores,
For this vain phantom, for this empty glory.
This may be virtue; but I thank the gods,
The soul of Barce's not a Roman soul. [*Exit.*

SCENE—Within sight of the Tiber—ships ready for the embarkation of Regulus and the Ambassador—Tribune and People stopping up the passage—Consul and Lictors endeavouring to clear it.

MANLIUS and LICINIUS advance.

Lic. Rome will not suffer Regulus to go.

Man. I thought the consul and the senators Had been a part of Rome.

Lic. I grant they are—

But still the people are the greater part.

Man. The greater, not the wiser.

Lic. The less cruel.—

Full of esteem and gratitude to Regulus,
We would preserve his life.

Man. And we his honour.

Lic. His honour!—

Man. Yes. Time presses. Words are vain.
Make way there—clear the passage.

Lic. On your lives,

Stir not a man.

Man. I do command you, go.

Lic. And I forbid it.

Man. Clear the way, my friends.

How dares Licinius thus oppose the consul?

Lic. How dar'st thou, Manlius, thus oppose the tribune!

Man. I'll show thee what I dare, imprudent Lictors, force through the passage. [*boy!*

Lic. Romans, guard it.

Man. Gods! is my power resisted then with Thou dost affront the majesty of Rome. [*arms!*

Lic. The majesty of Rome is in the people;
Thou dost insult it by opposing them.

People. Let noble Regulus remain in Rome.

Man. My friends, let me explain this treacherous scheme.

People. We will not hear thee—Regulus shall

Man. What! none obey me? [*stav.*

People. Regulus shall stay.

Man. Romans, attend.—

People. Let Regulus remain.

Enter REGULUS, followed by PUBLIUS, ATTILIA, HAMILCAR, BARCE, &c.

Reg. Let Regulus remain! What do I hear?

Is't possible the wish should come from you?

Can Romans give, or Regulus accept,

A life of infamy! Is't possible?

Where is the ancient virtue of my country?

Rise, rise, ye mighty spirits of old Rome!

I do invoke you from your silent tombs;

Fabricius, Cocles, and Camillus, rise, [*were.*

And show your sons what their great fathers

My countrymen, what crime have I committed?

Alas! how has the wretched Regulus

Deserv'd your hatred!

Lic. Hatred! ah! my friend,
It is our love would break these cruel chains.

Reg. If you deprive me of my chains, I'm nothing;

They are my honours, riches, titles,—all! [*try;*

They'll shame my enemies, and grace my coun-

They'll waite her glory to remotest climes,

Beyond her provinces and conquer'd realms,

Where yet her conq'ring eagles never flew;

Nor shall she blush hereafter if she find

Recorded with her faithful citizens,

The name of Regulus, the captive Regulus.

My countrymen! what, think you, kept in awe

The Volsci, Sabines, Æqui, and Hernici?

The arms of Rome alone! no, 'twas her virtue,

That sole surviving good, which brave men keep,

Though fate and warring worlds combine against them:

This still is mine—and I'll preserve it, Romans!

The wealth of Plutus shall not bribe it from me!

If you, alas! require this sacrifice,

Carthage herself was less my foe than Rome;

She took my freedom—she could take no more;

But Rome, to crown her work, would take my honour.

My friends! if you deprive me of my chains,

I am no more than any other slave:

Yes, Regulus becomes a common captive,

A wretched, lying, perjur'd fugitive!

But if, to grace my bonds, you leave my honour,

I shall be still a Roman, though a slave. [*ges?*

Lic. What faith should be observ'd with sava-
What promise should be kept which bonds extort!

Reg. Unworthy subterfuge! ah! let us leave

To the wild Arab and the faithless Moor

These wretched maxims of decent and fraud:

Examples ne'er can justify the coward.

The brave man never seeks a vindication,

Save from his own just bosom and the gods;

From principle, not precedent, he acts;

As that arraigns him, or as that acquits,

He stands or falls; condemn'd or justified.

Lic. Rome is no more, if Regulus departs.

Reg. Let Rome remember Regulus must die;
Nor would the moment of my death be distant,

If nature's work had been reserv'd for nature :
 What Carthage means to do, she would have
 As speedily, perhaps, at least as surely. [done,
 My wearied life has almost reach'd its goal ;
 The once warm current stagnates in these veins,
 Or through its icy channels slowly creeps—
 View the weak arm ; mark the pale, furrow'd
 cheek,

The slacken'd sinew, and the dim sunk eye,
 And tell me then I must not think of dying !
 How can I serve you else ? My feeble limbs
 Would totter now beneath the armour's weight,
 The burden of that body it once shielded.

You see, my friends, you see, my countrymen,
 I can no longer show myself a Roman,
 Except by dying like one.—Gracious Heaven
 Points out a way to crown my days with glory ;
 O, do not frustrate then the will of Jove,
 And close a life of virtue with disgrace.

Come, come, I know my noble Romans better ;
 I see your souls, I read repentance in them ;
 You all applaud me—nay, you wish my chains ;
 'Twas nothing but excess of love misled you,
 And, as you're Romans, you will conquer that.
 Yes !—I perceive your weakness is subdued—
 Seize, seize the moment of returning virtue ;
 Throw to the ground, my sons, those hostile
 Retard no longer Regulus's triumph ; [arms ;
 I do request it of you as a friend,
 I call you to your duty as a patriot,
 And—were I still your gen'ral, I'd command
 you.

Lic. Lay down your arms—let Regulus depart.
*(To the people, who clear the way, and quit their
 arms.)*

Reg. Gods ! gods ! I thank you—you indeed
 are righteous. [oh, father !

Pub. See every man disarm'd. Oh, Rome !

Att. Hold, hold, my heart. Alas ! they all
 obey. [thee.

Reg. The way is clear. Hamilcar, I attend

Ham. Why, I begin to envy this old man !
(aside.)

Man. Not the proud victor on the day of tri-
 umph,

Warm from the slaughter of dispeopled realms,
 Though conquer'd princes grace his chariot
 wheels,

Though tributary monarchs wait his nod,
 And vanquish'd nations bend the knee before him,
 E'er shone with half the lustre that surrounds
 This voluntary sacrifice for Rome !

Who loves his country will obey her laws ;
 Who most obeys them is the truest patriot.

Reg. Be our last parting worthy of ourselves.

Farewell ! my friends. I bless the gods who
 rule us,

Since I must leave you, that I leave you Romans.

Preserve the glorious name untainted still,

And you shall be the rulers of the globe,

The arbiters of earth. The farthest east,

Beyond where Ganges rolls his rapid flood,

Shall proudly emulate the Roman name.

(Kneels.) Ye gods, the guardians of this glori-
 ous people,

Who watch with jealous eye Æneas' race,

This land of heroes I commit to you ! [care !

This ground, these walls, this people, be your

Oh ! bless them, bless them with a liberal hand !

Let fortitude and valour, truth and justice,

For ever flourish and increase among them !

And if some baneful planet threat the capitol

With its malignant influence, oh ! avert it.

Be Regulus the victim of your wrath.—

On this white head be all your vengeance pour'd,

But spare, oh ! spare, and bless immortal Rome !

Ah ! tears ! my Romans weep ! Farewell ! fare-
 well !

*ATTILIA struggles to get to REGULUS—is pre-
 vented—she faints—he fixes his eye steadily
 on her for some time, and then departs to the
 ships.*

MANLIUS. (looking after him.) Farewell ! fare-
 well ! thou glory of mankind !

Protector, father, saviour of thy country !

Through Regulus the Roman name shall live,

Shall triumph over time, and mock oblivion.

Farewell ! thou pride of this immortal coast !

'Tis Rome alone a Regulus can boast

EPILOGUE.

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

WHAT son of physis, but his heart extends,
 As well as hand, when call'd on by his friends ?
 What landlord is so weak to make you fast,
 When guests like you bespeak a good repast ?
 But weaker still were he whom fate has plac'd
 To sooth your cares, and gratify your taste,
 Should he neglect to bring before your eyes,
 Those dainty dramas which from genius rise ;
 Whether your luxury be to smile or weep,
 His and your profits just proportion keep.
 To-night he brought, nor fears a due reward,
 A Roman Patriot by a Female Bard.
 Britons, who feel his flame, his worth will rate,
 No common spirit his, no common fate.
 INFLEXIBLE and CAPTIVE must be great.
 "How !" cries a sucking fop, thus lounging,
 straddling,

*(Whose head shows want of ballast by its nod-
 dling),*

"A woman write ? Learn, madam, of your
 betters,

And read a noble lord's posthumous letters.

There you will learn the sex may merit praise,

By making puddings—not by making plays :

They can make tea and mischief, dance and sing ;

Their heads, though full of feathers, can't take
 wing." [chance,

I thought they could, sir ; now and then, by

Maids fly to Scotland, and some wives to France

He still went nodding on—"Do all she can,

Woman's a trifle—plaything—like her fan."

Right, sir, and when a wife, the *rattle* of a man.

And shall such things as these become the *test*
 Of female worth ? the fairest and the best

Of all heaven's creatures! for so Milton sung us,
And, with such champions, who shall dare to
wrong us! [ray'd;
Come forth, proud man, in all your pow'rs ar-
Shine out in all your splendour—who's afraid!
Who on French wit has made a glorious war,
Defended Shakspeare, and subdued Voltaire!—
Woman!—Who, rich in knowledge, knows no
pride,
Can boast ten tongues, and yet not satisfied!

* Mrs. Montague, author of an essay on the writings of Shakspeare.

Vol. I.

Woman! * Who lately sung the sweetest lay!
A woman! woman! woman! † still I say.
Well then, who dares deny our power and might!
Will any married man dispute our right!
Speak boldly, sirs,—your wives are not in sight.
What! are you silent! then you are content;
Silence, the proverb tells us, gives consent.
Critics, will you allow our honest claim!
Are you dumb too! This night has fix'd our
fame.

* Mrs. Carter, well known for her skill in ancient and modern languages.

† Miss Aikin, whose poems were just published.

2 L

In this play Percy Earl of Northumberland and Earl Douglas are declared and her enemies. Percy has gone to Palestine to fight the Turks. It seems **Ruby** the father of Elvina had promised her to Percy as they loved each other but **Ruby** through some offence became estranged to him and in spite married his daughter to Douglas. Douglas loving her but it was not reciprocal. At the opening of the play Douglas is jealous and Percy having returned with honors from Palestine is expecting to be married to Elvina, but he finds her married to his enemy. The whole theme of the tragedy begins to be so having him arrested. At last they fight in a small combat and Percy is slain, but Douglas made this arrangement with his men that if he was killed that they should offer Elvina a basin of poison to drink. She having heard of this from Bertha when she knows that Percy is slain, drinks the poison and when she is dying Douglas kills himself leaving **Ruby** the father as the cause of the whole tragedy.

PERCY:

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

A Classical Tragedy.

REMARKS.

The feuds of the rival houses of Percy and of Douglas have furnished materials for this melancholy tale, in which Mrs. More* has embodied many judicious sentiments and excellent passages, producing a forcible lesson to parental tyranny. The victim of her husband's unreasonable jealousy, *Elwina's* virtuous conflict is pathetic and interesting; while *Percy's* sufferings, and the vain regret of *Earl Raby*, excite and increase our sympathy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PERCY, Earl of Northumberland,	Mr. Lewis.
✕ EARL DOUGLAS,	Mr. Wroughton.
— EARL RABY, Elwina's Father,	Mr. Aickin.
— EDRIC, Friend to Douglas,	Mr. Whitefield.
— HARCOURT, Friend to Percy,	Mr. Robson.
SIR HUBERT, a Knight,	Mr. Hull.
✕ ELWINA, daughter to Earl Raby,	Mrs. Barry.
— BIRTHA, sister to Elwina,	Mrs. Jackson.

Knights, Guards, Attendants, &c.
SCENE.—Raby Castle, in Durham.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A Gothic Hall.

Enter EDRIC and BIRTHA.

Bir. What may this mean? Earl Douglas has enjoin'd thee

To meet him here in private?

Edr. Yes, my sister,
And this injunction I have oft receiv'd;
But when he comes, big with some painful secret,
He starts, looks wild, then drops ambiguous hints,
Frowns, hesitates, turns pale, and says 'twas nothing;

Then feigns to smile, and by his anxious care
To prove himself at ease, betrays his pain.

Bir. Since my short sojourn here, I've mark'd
this earl,

And though the ties of blood unite us closely,
I shudder at his haughtiness of temper,
Which not his gentle wife, the bright Elwina,
Can charm to rest. Ill are their spirits pair'd;
His is the seat of frenzy, hers of softness,
His love is transport, hers is trembling duty;
Rage in his soul is as the whirlwind fierce,
While hers ne'er felt the power of that rude passion.

Edr. Perhaps the mighty soul of Douglas mourns,
Because inglorious love detains him here,
While our bold knights, beneath the Christian standard,
Press to the bulwarks of Jerusalem.

Bir. Though every various charm adorns
Elwina,

* Of this estimable lady, a cotemporary writer says, "This lady has for many years flourished in the literary world, which she has richly adorned by a variety of labours, all possessing strong marks of excellence. In the cause of religion and society, her labours are original and indefatigable; and the industrious poor have been once enlightened by her instructions, and supported by her bounty"

And though the noble Douglas dotes to madness,
Yet some dark mystery involves their fate:
'The canker grief devours Elwina's bloom,
And on her brow meek resignation sits,
Hopeless, yet uncomplaining.

Edr. 'Tis most strange.

Bir. Once, not long since, she thought herself alone;

'Twas then the pent-up anguish burst its bounds;
With broken voice, clasp'd hands, and streaming eyes,

She call'd upon her father, call'd him cruel,
And said her duty claim'd far other recompense.

Edr. Perhaps the absence of the good Lord Raby,

Who, at her nuptials, quitted this fair castle,
Resigning it to her, may thus afflict her.

Hast thou e'er question'd her, good Birtha?

Bir. Often,

But hitherto in vain; and yet she shows me
The endearing kindness of a sister's love;
But if I speak to Douglas—

Edr. See! he comes.

It would offend him should he find you here.

Enter DOUGLAS.

Dou. How! Edric and his sister in close conference?

Do they not seem alarm'd at my approach?
And see, how suddenly they part! Now Edric,

[*Exit BIRTHA.*]

Was this well done? or was it like a friend,
When I desir'd to meet thee here alone,
With all the warmth of trusting confidence,
To lay my bosom naked to thy view,
And show thee all its weakness, was it well
To call thy sister here, to let her witness
Thy friend's infirmity?—perhaps to tell her—

Edr. My lord, I nothing know; I came to learn.

Dou. Nay then thou dost suspect there's something wrong?

Edr. If we were bred from infancy together,
If I partook in all thy youthful griefs,
And every joy thou knew'st was doubly mine,
Then tell me all the secret of thy soul:
Or have these few short months of separation,
The only absence we have ever known,
Have these so rent the bands of love asunder,
That Douglas should distrust his Edric's truth?

Dou. My friend, I know thee faithful as thou'rt brave,

And I will trust thee—but not now, good Edric.
'Tis past, 'tis gone, it is not worth the telling,
'Twas wrong to cherish what disturb'd my peace;
I'll think of it no more.

Edr. Transporting news!

I fear'd some hidden trouble vex'd your quiet.

In secret I have watch'd—

Dou. Ha! watch'd in secret?

A spy, employ'd, perhaps, to note my actions.
What have I said? Forgive me, thou art noble:
Yet do not press me to disclose my grief,
For when thou know'st it, I perhaps shall hate thee
As much, my Edric, as I hate myself
For my suspicions—I am ill at ease.

Edr. How will the fair Elwina grieve to hear it!

Dou. Hold, Edric, hold—thou hast touch'd the fatal string

That wakes me into madness. Hear me then,

But let the deadly secret be secured

With bars of adamant in thy close breast.

Think on the curse which waits on broken oaths;

A knight is bound by more than vulgar ties,
And perjury in thee were doubly damn'd.

Well then, the king of England—

Edr. Is expected

From distant Palestine.

Dou. Forbid it, Heaven!

For with him comes—

Edr. Ah! who?

Dou. Peace, peace,

For see Elwina's here. Retire, my Edric;
When next we meet, thou shalt know all. Fare-
well. [*Exit EDRIC.*]

Now to conceal with care my bosom's anguish,
And let her beauty chase away my sorrows!
Yes, I would meet her with a face of smiles—
But 'twill not be.

Enter ELWINA.

Elw. Alas, 'tis ever thus!

Thus ever clouded is his angry brow. [*Aside.*]

Dou. I were too bless'd, Elwina, could I hope
You met me here by choice, or that your bosom
Shard the warm transports mine must ever feel
At your approach.

Elw. My lord, if I intrude, [*giveness:*]
The cause which brings me claims at least for-
I fear you are not well, and come, unbidden,
Except by faithful duty, to inquire,
If haply in my power, my little power
I have the means to minister relief
To your affliction?

Dou. What unwonted goodness
O I were bless'd above the lot of man,
If tenderness, not duty, brought Elwina;
Cold, ceremonious, and unfeeling duty,
That wretched substitute for love: but know,
The heart demands a heart; nor will be paid
With less than what it gives. E'en now, Elwina,
The glistening tear stands trembling in your eyes,
Which cast their mournful sweetness on the
ground,

As if they fear'd to raise their beams to mine,
And read the language of reproachful love.

Elw. My lord, I hop'd the thousand daily proofs
Of my obedience—

Dou. Death to all my hopes! [*ence?*]
Heart-rending word!—obedience! what's obedi-
'Tis fear, 'tis hate, 'tis terror, 'tis aversion,
'Tis the cold debt of ostentatious duty,
Paid with insulting caution, to remind me
How much you tremble to offend a tyrant
So terrible as Douglas.—O, Elwina—
While duty measures the regard it owes
With scrupulous precision and nice justice,
Love never reasons, but profusely gives,
Gives, like a thoughtless prodigal, its all,
And trembles then, lest it has done too little.

Elw. Indeed I'm most unhappy that my cares,
And my solicitude to please, offend.

Dou. True tenderness is less solicitous,
Less prudent and more fond; the enamour'd heart
Conscious it loves, and bless'd in being lov'd,
Reposes on the object it adores,
And trusts the passion it inspires and feels—
'Thou hast not learn'd how terrible it is
'To feed a hopeless flame.—But hear, Elwina,
Thou most obdurate, hear me.—

Elw. Say, my lord,

For your own lips shall vindicate my fame,
Since at the altar I became your wife,
Can malice charge me with an act, a word,
I ought to blush at? Have I not still liv'd

As open to the eye of observation,
As fearless innocence should ever lie ?
I call attesting angels to be witness,
If in my open deed, or secret thought,
My conduct, or my heart, they've aught discern'd
Which did not emulate their purity.

Dou. This vindication ere you were accus'd,
This warm defence, repelling all attacks
Ere they are made, and construing casual words
To formal accusations, trust me, Madam,
Shows rather an alarm'd and vigilant spirit,
For ever on the watch to guard its secret,
Than the sweet calm of fearless innocence.
Who talk'd of guilt ? Who testified suspicion ?

Elw. Learn, Sir, that virtue, while 'tis free from blame,

Is modest, lowly, meek, and unassuming ;
Not apt, like fearful vice, to shield its weakness
Beneath the studied pomp of boastful phrase
Which swells to hide the poverty it shelters ;
But, when this virtue feels itself suspected,
Insulted, set at nought, its whiteness stain'd,
It then grows proud, forgets its humble worth,
And rates itself above its real value,

Dou. I did not mean to chide ! but think, O think,

What pangs must rend this fearful doting heart,
To see you sink impatient of the grave,
To feel, distracting thought ! to feel you hate me !

Elw. What if the slender thread by which I hold

This poor precarious being soon must break,
Is it Elwina's crime, or Heaven's decree ?
Yet I shall meet, I trust, the king of terrors,
Submissive and resign'd, without one pang,
One fond regret, at leaving this gay world.

Dou. Yes, Madam, there is one, one man ador'd,
For whom your sighs will heave, your tears will flow,

For whom this hated world will still be dear,
For whom you still would live ——

Elw. Hold, hold my lord,
What may this mean ?

Dou. Ah ! I have gone too far.
What have I said ?—Your father, sure, your father,
The good Lord Raby, may at least expect
One tender sigh.

Elw. Alas, my lord ! I thought
The precious incense of a daughter's sighs
Might rise to heaven, and not offend its ruler.

Dou. 'Tis true ; yet Raby is no more belov'd
Since he bestow'd his daughter's hand on Douglas :
That was a crime the dutiful Elwina
Can never pardon ; and believe me, Madam,
My love's so nice, so delicate my honour,
I am asham'd to owe my happiness
To ties which make you wretched. [*Exit DOUGLAS.*]

Elw. Ah ! how's this ?

Though I have ever found him fierce and rash,
Full of obscure surmises and dark hints,
Till now he never ventur'd to accuse me.
" Yet there is one, one man belov'd, ador'd,
For whom your tears will flow"—these were his words—

And then the wretched subterfuge of Raby—
How poor th' evasion !—But my Birtha comes.

Enter BIRTHA.

Bir. Crossing the portico I met Lord Douglas,
Disorder'd were his looks, his eyes shot fire ;
He call'd upon your name with such distraction
I fear'd some sudden evil had befallen you.

Elw. Not sudden : no ; long has the storm
been gathering,
Which threatens speedily to burst in ruin
On this devoted head.

Bir. I ne'er beheld
Your gentle soul so ruffled, yet I've marked you,
While others thought you happiest of the happy,
Bless'd with what'er the world calls great, or good,

With all that nature, all that fortune gives,
I've mark'd you hending with a weight of sorrow.

Elw. O I will tell thee all ! thou couldst not find
An hour, a moment in Elwina's life,
When her full heart so long'd to ease its burden,
And pour its sorrows in thy friendly bosom :

Hear then, with pity hear, my tale of woe,
And, O forgive, kind nature, filial piety,
If my presumptuous lips arraign a father !
Yes, Birtha, that belov'd, that cruel father,
Has doom'd me to a life of hopeless anguish,
To die of grief ere half my days are number'd ;
Doom'd me to give my trembling hand to Douglas,
'Twas all I had to give—my heart was—Percy's.

Bir. What do I hear ?

Elw. My misery, not my crime.

Long since the battle 'twixt the rival houses
Of Douglas and of Percy, for whose hate
'This mighty globe's too small a theatre,
One summer's morn, my father chas'd the deer
On Cheviot Hills, Northumbria's fair domain.

Bir. On that fam'd spot where first the feuds
commenc'd

Between the earls ?

Elw. The same. During the chace,
Some of my father's knights receiv'd an insult
From the Lord Percy's herdsmen, churlish fo-
resters,

Unworthy of the gentle blood they serv'd.
My father, proud and jealous of his honour,
(Thou know'st the fiery temper of our barons,)
Swore that Northumberland had been concern'd
In this rude outrage, nor would hear of peace,
Or reconciliation, which the Percy offer'd ;
But bade me hate, renounce, and banish him.
O ! 'twas a task too hard for all my duty :
I strove, and wept ; I strove—but still I lov'd.

Bir. Indeed 'twas most unjust ; but say what
follow'd ? [*tale ?*]

Elw. Why should I dwell on the disastrous
Forbidden to see me, Percy soon embark'd
With our great king against the Saracen.
Soon as the jarring kingdoms were at peace,
Earl Douglas, whom till then I ne'er had seen,
Came to this castle ; 'twas my hapless fate
To please him.—Birtha ! thou can'st tell what
followed :

But who shall tell the agonies I felt ?
My barbarous father forc'd me to dissolve
The tender vows himself had bid me form——
He dragg'd me trembling, dying, to the altar,
I sigh'd, I struggled, fainted, and complied.

Bir. Did Douglas know, a marriage had been
Propos'd 'twixt you and Percy ? [*once*]

Elw. If he did,
He thought, like you, it was a match of policy,
Nor knew our love surpass'd our fathers' prudence.

Bir. Should he now find he was the instru-
ment

Of the Lord Raby's vengeance ?

Elw. 'Twere most dreadful !

My father lock'd this motive in his breast,
And feign'd to have forgot the chace of Cheviot.

Some moons have now completed their slow course
Since my sad marriage.—Percy still is absent.

Bir. Nor will return before his sov'reign comes.

Elw. Talk not of his return! this coward heart
Can know no thought of peace but in his absence.
How, Douglas here again? some fresh alarm!

Enter DOUGLAS, agitated, with letters in his hand.

Dou. Madam, your pardon—

Elw. What disturbs my lord? [case.]

Dou. Nothing.—Disturb! I ne'er was more at
These letters from your father give us notice
He will be here to-night:—He farther adds,
The king's each hour expected.

Elw. How! the king?

Said you, the king?

Dou. And 'tis Lord Raby's pleasure
That you among the foremost bid him welcome.
You must attend the court.

Elw. Must I, my lord?

Dou. Now to observe how she receives the
news! [Aside.]

Elw. I must not,—cannot.—By the tender love
You have so oft profess'd for poor Elwina,
Indulge this one request—O let me stay!

Dou. Enchanting sounds! she does not wish
to go— [Aside.]

Elw. The bustling world, the pomp which
waits on greatness,

Ill suits my humble, unambitious soul;—
Then leave me here, to tread the safer path
Of private life; here, where my peaceful course
Shall be as silent as the shades around me;
Nor shall one vagrant wish be e'er allow'd
To stray beyond the bounds of Raby Castle.

Dou. O music to my ears! [Aside.] Can you
resolve

To hide those wondrous beauties in the shade,
Which rival kings would cheaply buy with empire?
Can you renounce the pleasures of a court,
Whose roofs resound with minstrelsy and mirth?

Elw. My lord, retirement is a wife's best duty,
And virtue's safest station is retreat.

Dou. My soul's in transports! [Aside.] But
can you forego

What wins the soul of woman—admiration?
A world, where charms inferior far to yours
Only presume to shine when you are absent!
Will you not long to meet the public gaze?
Long to eclipse the fair, and charm the brave?

Elw. These are delights in which the mind
partakes not.

Dou. I'll try her farther. [Aside.]
[Takes her hand, and looks steadfastly at her
as he speaks.]

But reflect once more:

When you shall hear that England's gallant peers,
Fresh from the fields of war, and gay with glory,
All vain with conquest, and elate with fame,
When you shall hear these princely youths contend,
In many a tournament, for beauty's prize;
When you shall hear of revelry and masking,
Of mimic combats and of festive halls,
Of lances shiver'd in the cause of love,
Will you not then repent, then wish your fate,
Your happier fate, had till that hour reserv'd you
For some plumed conqueror?

Elw. My fate, my lord,
Is now bound up with yours.

Dou. Here let me kneel— [der;
Yes, I will kneel, and gaze, and weep, and won-
Thou paragon of goodness!—pardon, pardon.

[Kisses her hand.]

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I am convinc'd—I can no longer doubt,
Nor talk, nor hear, nor reason, nor reflect.
—I must retire, and give a loose to joy.

[Exit DOUGLAS.]

Bir. The king returns.

Elw. And with him Percy comes!

Bir. You needs must go.

Elw. Shall I solicit ruin,

And pull destruction on me ere its time?

I, who have held it criminal to name him?

I will not go—I disobey thee, Douglas,

But disobey thee to preserve thy honour. [Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—The Hall.

Enter DOUGLAS, speaking.

See that the traitor instantly be seiz'd,
And strictly watch'd; let none have access to him,
—O jealousy, thou aggregate of woes!
Were there no hell, thy torments would create one.
But yet she may be guiltless—may? she must.
How beautiful she look'd! pernicious beauty!
Yet innocent as bright seem'd the sweet blush
That mantled on her cheek. But not for me,
But not for me, those breathing roses blow!
And then she wept—What! can I bear her tears?
Well—let her weep—her tears are for another;
O did they fall for me, to dry their streams
I'd drain the choicest blood that feeds this heart,
Nor think the drops I shed were half so precious.

[He stands in a musing posture.]

Enter LORD RABY.

Raby. Sure I mistake—am I in Raby Castle?
Impossible; that was the seat of smiles;
And Cheerfulness and Joy were household gods.
I us'd to scatter pleasures when I came,
And every servant shar'd his lord's delight;
But now Suspicion and Distrust dwell here,
And Discontent maintains a sullen sway.
Where is the smile unfeign'd, the jovial welcome,
Which cheer'd the sad, beguill'd the pilgrim's pain,
And made Dependency forget its bonds?
Where is the ancient, hospitable hall,
Whose vaulted roof once rung with harmless mirth,
Where every passing stranger was a guest,
And every guest a friend? I fear me much,
If once our nobles scorn their rural seats,
Their rural greatness, and their vassals' love,
Freedom and English grandeur are no more.

Dou. [Advancing.] My lord, you are welcome.

Raby. Sir, I trust I am;
But yet methinks I shall not feel I'm welcome
Till my Elwina bless me with her smiles:
She was not wont with ling'ring step to meet me,
Or greet my coming with a cold embrace;
Now, I extend my longing arms in vain:
My child, my darling, does not come to fill them.
O they were happy days, when she would fly
To meet me from the camp, or from the chase,
And with her fondness overpay my toils!
How eager would her tender hands unbrace
The ponderous armour from my war-worn limbs,
And pluck the helmet which oppos'd her kiss!

Dou. O sweet delights, that never must be mine!

Raby. What do I hear?

Dou. Nothing: inquire no farther.

Raby. My lord, if you respect an old man's
peace,

If e'er you doted on my much-lov'd child,
As 'tis most sure you made me think you did,

Then, by the pangs which you may one day feel,
When you, like me, shall be a fond, fond father,
And tremble for the treasure of your age,
'Tell me what this alarming silence means?
You sigh, you do not speak, nay more, you hear
not;

Your lab'ring soul turns inward on itself,
As there were nothing but your own sad thoughts
Deserv'd regard. Does my child live?

Dou. She does.

Raby. To bless her father!

Dou. And to curse her husband!

Raby. Ah! have a care, my lord, I'm not so
old—

Dou. Nor I so base, that I should tamely bear it;
Nor am I so inur'd to infamy,
That I can say, without a burning blush,
She lives to be my curse!

Raby. How's this?

Dou. I thought

The lily opening to the heaven's soft dews,
Was not so fragrant, and was not so chaste.

Raby. Has she prov'd otherwise? I'll not be-
lieve it.

Who has traduc'd my sweet, my innocent child?
Yet she's too good to 'scape calumnious tongues.

I know that Slander loves a lofty mark:

It saw her soar a flight above her fellows,
And hurl'd its arrow to her glorious height,
To reach her heart, and bring her to the ground.

Dou. Had the rash tongue of Slander so pre-
sum'd,

My vengeance had not been of that slow sort
To need a prompter; nor should any arm,
No, not a father's, dare dispute with mine,
The privilege to curse in her defence.
None dares accuse Elwina, but—

Raby. But who?

Dou. But Douglas.

Raby. [*Puts his hand to his sword.*] You?—
O spare my age's weakness!

You do not know what 'tis to be a father;
You do not know, or you would pity me,
The thousand tender throbs, the nameless feel-
ings,

The dread to ask, and yet the wish to know,
When we adore and fear; but wherefore fear?

Does not the blood of Raby fill her veins?

Dou. Percy;—know'st thou that name?

Raby. How? What of Percy?

Dou. He loves Elwina, and, my curses on him!
He is belov'd again.

Raby. I'm on the rack!

Dou. Not the two Theban brothers bore each
other

Such deep, such deadly hate as I and Percy.

Raby. But tell me of my child.

Dou. [*Not minding him.*] As I and Percy!
When at the marriage rites, O rites accurs'd!
I seiz'd her trembling hand, she started back,
Cold horror thrill'd her veins, her tears flow'd fast.
Fool that I was, I thought 'twas maiden fear;
Dull, doting ignorance: beneath those terrors,
Hatred for me and love for Percy lurk'd.

Raby. What proof of guilt is this?

Dou. E'er since our marriage,
Our days have still been cold and joyless all;
Painful restraint, and hatred ill disguis'd,
Her sole return for all my waste of fondness.
This very morn I told her 'twas your will
She should repair to court; with all those graces,
Which first subdued my soul, and still enslave it,

She begg'd to stay behind in Raby Castle,
For courts and cities had no charms for her.
Curse my blind love! I was again ensnar'd,
And doted on the sweetness which deceiv'd me.
Just at the hour she thought I should be absent,
(For chance could ne'er have tim'd their guilt so
well.)

Arriv'd young Harcourt, one of Percy's knights,
Strictly enjoin'd to speak to none but her;
I seiz'd the miscreant: hitherto he's silent,
But tortures soon shall force him to confess!

Raby. Percy is absent—They have never met.

Dou. At what a feeble hold you grasp for suc-
cour!

Will it content me that her person's pure?

No, if her alien heart dotes on another,
She is unchaste, were not that other Percy.
Let vulgar spirits basely wait for proof,
She loves another—'tis enough for Douglas.

Raby. Be patient.

Dou. Be a tame convenient husband,
And meanly wait for circumstantial guilt?

No—I am nice as the first Cæsar was,
And start at bare suspicion. [*Going.*]

Raby. [*Holding him.*] Douglas, hear me:
Thou hast nam'd a Roman husband; if she's
false,

I mean to prove myself a Roman father.

[*Exit DOUGLAS.*]
This marriage was my work, and thus I'm pu-
nish'd!

Enter ELWINA.

Elw. Where is my father? let me fly to meet
O let me clasp his venerable knees, [*him,*
And die of joy in his belov'd embrace!

Raby. [*Avoiding her embrace.*] Elwina!

Elw. And is that all? so cold?

Raby. [*Sternly.*] Elwina!

Elw. Then I'm undone indeed! How stern
his looks!

I will not be repuls'd, I am your child,
The child of that dear mother you ador'd;
You shall not throw me off, I will grow here,
And, like the patriarch, wrestle for a blessing.

Raby. [*Holding her from him.*] Before I take
thee in these aged arms,

Press thee with transport to this beating heart

And give a loose to all a parent's fondness,

Answer, and see thou answer me as truly

As if the dread inquiry came from Heaven,—

Does no interior sense of guilt confound thee?

Canst thou lay all thy naked soul before me?

Can thy unconscious eye encounter mine?

Canst thou endure the probe, and never shrink?

Can thy firm hand meet mine, and never tremble?

Art thou prepar'd to meet the rigid Judge?

Or to embrace the fond, the melting father?

Elw. Mysterious Heaven! to what am I re-
serv'd!

Raby. Should some rash man, regardless of
thy fame,

And in defiance of thy marriage vows,
Presume to plead a guilty passion for thee
What wouldst thou do?

Elw. What honour bids me do.

Raby. Come to my arms! [*They embrace*

Elw. My father!

Raby. Yes, Elwina,

Thou art my child—thy mother's perfect image.

Elw. Forgive these tears of mingled joy and
doubt;

For why that question? who should seek to please
The desolate Elwina?

Raby. But if any
Should so presume, canst thou resolve to hate him,
Whate'er his name, whate'er his pride of blood,
Whate'er his former arrogant pretensions?

Elw. Ha!

Raby. Dost thou falter? Have a care, Elwina.

Elw. Sir, do not fear me: am I not your
daughter?

Raby. Thou hast a higher claim upon thy
Thou art Earl Douglas' wife.

Elw. [Weeps.] I am, indeed!

Raby. Unhappy Douglas!

Elw. Has he then complain'd

Has he presum'd to sully my white fame?

Raby. He knows that Percy—

Elw. Was my destin'd husband;

By your own promise, by a father's promise,
And by a tie more strong, more sacred still,
Mine, by the fast firm bond of mutual love.

Raby. Now, by my fears, thy husband told me
truth.

Elw. If he has told thee, that thy only child
Was forc'd a helpless victim to the altar,
Torn from his arms who had her virgin heart,
And forc'd to make false vows to one she hated,
Then I confess that he has told the truth.

Raby. Her words are barbed arrows in my
heart.

But 'tis too late. [*Aside.*] Thou hast appointed
Harcourt

To see thee here by stealth in Douglas' absence?

Elw. No, by my life, nor knew I till this moment
That Harcourt was return'd. Was it for this
I taught my heart to struggle with its feelings?
Was it for this I bore my wrongs in silence?
When the fond ties of early love were broken,
Did my weak soul break out in fond complaints?
Did I reproach thee? Did I call thee cruel?
No—I endur'd it all; and wearied Heaven
To bless the father who destroy'd my peace.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord, a knight, Sir Hubert as I think,
But newly landed from the holy wars,
Entreats admittance.

Raby. Let the warrior enter.

[*Exit MESSENGER.*]

All private interests sink at his approach;
All selfish cares be for a moment banish'd;
I've now no child, no kindred but my country.

Elw. Weak heart, be still, for what hast thou
to fear?

Enter SIR HUBERT.

Raby. Welcome, thou gallant knight! Sir Hu-
bert, welcome!

Welcome to Raby Castle!—In one word,
Is the king safe? Is Palestine subdu'd?

Sir H. The king is safe, and Palestine subdu'd.

Raby. Bless'd be the God of armies! Now, Sir
Hubert,

By all the saints, thou'rt a right noble knight.
O why was I too old for this crusade!
I think it would have made me young again,
Could I, like thee, have seen the hated crescent
Yield to the Christian cross.—How now, Elwina!
What! cold at news which might awake the dead?
If there's a drop in thy degenerate veins
That glows not now, thou art not Raby's daughter.
It is religion's cause, the cause of Heaven!

Elw. When policy assumes religion's name,
And wears the sanctimonious garb of faith
Only to colour fraud, and license murder,
War then is tenfold guilt.

Raby. Blaspheming girl!

Elw. 'Tis not the crossier, nor the pontiff's robe
The saintly look, nor elevated eye,
Nor Palestine destroy'd, nor Jordan's banks
Deluged with blood of slaughter'd infidels;
No, nor the extinction of the eastern world,
Nor all the mad, pernicious, bigot rage
Of your crusades, can bribe that Power that sees
The motive with the act. O blind, to think
That cruel war can please the Prince of Peace!
He, who erects his altar in the heart,
Abhors the sacrifice of human blood,
And all the false devotion of that zeal
Which massacres the world he died to save.

Raby. O impious rage! If thou wouldst shun
my curse, [*Hubert,*
No more, I charge thee.—Tell me, good Sir
Say, have our arms achiev'd this glorious deed,
(I fear to ask,) without much Christian blood-shed?

Elw. Now, Heaven support me!

[*Aside.*]

Sir H. My good lord of Raby,
Imperfect is the sum of human glory!
Would I could tell thee that the field was won,
Without the death of such illustrious knights
As make the high-flush'd cheek of victory pale.
Elw. Why should I tremble thus? [*Aside.*
Raby. Who have we lost? [*Grey,*
Sir H. The noble Clifford, Walsingham, and
Sir Harry Hastings, and the valiant Pembroke,
All men of choicest note.

Raby. O that my name
Had been enroll'd in such a list of heroes!
If I was too infirm to serve my country,
I might have prov'd my love by dying for her.

Elw. Were there no more?

Sir H. But few of noble blood.
But the brave youth who gain'd the palm of glory,
The flower of knighthood, and the plume of war,
Who bore his banner foremost in the field,
Yet conquer'd more by mercy than the sword,
Was Percy.

Elw. Then he lives! [*Aside.*

Raby. Did he? Did Percy?
O gallant boy, then I'm thy foe no more;
Who conquers for my country is my friend!
His fame shall add new glories to a house,
Where never maid was false, nor knight dis-
loyal. [*tears:*

Sir H. You do embalm him, lady, with your
They grace the grave of glory where he lies—
He died the death of honour.

Elw. Said'st thou—died?

Sir H. Beneath the towers of Solyma he fell.

Elw. Oh!

Sir H. Look to the lady.

[*ELWINA faints in her father's arms.*]

Raby. Gentle knight, retire—
'Tis an infirmity of nature in her,
She ever mourns at any tale of blood;
She will be well anon—meantime, Sir Hubert,
You'll grace our castle with your friendly sojourn.

Sir H. I must return with speed—health to the
lady. [*Exit*

Raby. Look up, Elwina. Should her husband
Yet she revives not. [*come!*

Enter DOUGLAS.

Dou. Ha—Elwina fainting!

My lord, I fear you have too harshly chid her.
Her gentle nature could not brook your sternness.
She wakes, she stirs, she feels returning life.
My love! [*He takes her hand.*]

Elw. O Percy!

Dou. [*Starts.*] Do my senses fail me?

Elw. My Percy, 'tis Elwina calls.

Dou. Hell, hell!

Raby. Retire awhile, my daughter.

Elw. Douglas here,

My father and my husband?—O for pity
[*Exit, casting a look of anguish on both.*]

Dou. Now, now confess she well deserves my
vengeance!

Before my face to call upon my foe!

Raby. Upon a foe who has no power to hurt
Earl Percy's slain. [*thce—*]

Dou. I live again.—But hold—

Did she not weep? she did, and wept for Percy.

If she laments him, he's my rival still,

And not the grave can bury my resentment.

Raby. The truly brave are still the truly gen'rous.

Now, Douglas, is the time to prove thee both.

If it be true that she did once love Percy,

Thou hast no more to fear, since he is dead.

Release young Harcourt, let him see Elwina,

'Twill serve a double purpose, 'twill at once

Prove Percy's death, and thy unchang'd affection.

Be gentle to my child, and win her heart

By confidence and unrepublishing love.

Dou. By Heaven, thou counsel'st well! it shall
be done.

Go set him free, and let him have admittance

To my Elwina's presence.

Raby. Farewell, Douglas.

Show thou believ'st her faithful, and she'll prove
so. [*Exit.*]

Dou. Northumberland is dead—that thought is
peace!

Her heart may yet be mine, transporting hope!

Percy was gentle, even a foe avows it,

And I'll be milder than a summer's breeze.

Yes, thou most lovely, most ador'd of women,

I'll copy every virtue, every grace,

Of my bless'd rival, happier even in death

To be thus lov'd, than living to be scorn'd. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A Garden at Raby Castle, with a
Bower.

Enter PERCY and SIR HUBERT.

Sir H. That Percy lives, and is return'd in
safety,

More joys my soul than all the mighty conquests
That sun beheld, which rose on Syria's ruin.

Per. I've told thee, good Sir Hubert, by what
wonder

I was preserv'd, though number'd with the slain.

Sir H. 'Twas strange, indeed!

Per. 'Twas Heaven's immediate work!

But let me now indulge a dearer joy,

Talk of a richer gift of Mercy's hand;

A gift so precious to my doting heart,

That life preserv'd is but a second blessing.

O Hubert, let my soul indulge its softness!

The hour, the spot, is sacred to Elwina.

This was her fav'rite walk; I well remember,

(For who forgets that loves as I have lov'd?)

'Twas in that very bower she gave this scarf,

Wrought by the hand of love! she bound it on,

And, smiling, cried, Whate'er befell us, Percy,

Be this the sacred pledge of faith between us,
I knelt, and swore, call'd every power to witness,
No time, nor circumstance, should force it from me,
But I would lose my life and that together
Here I repeat my vow.

Sir H. Is this the man

Beneath whose single arm a host was crush'd?

He, at whose name the Saracen turn'd pale?

And when he fell, victorious armies wept,

And mourn'd a conquest they had bought so dear?

How has be chang'd the trumpet's martial note,

And all the stirring clangour of the war,

For the soft melting of the lover's lute!

Why are thine eyes still bent upon the bower?

Per. O Hubert, Hubert, to a soul enamour'd,

There is a sort of local sympathy,

Which, when we view the scenes of early passion,

Paints the bright image of the object lov'd

In stronger colours than remoter scenes

Could ever paint it; realizes shade,

Dresses it up in all the charms it wore,

Talks to it nearer, frames its answers kinder,

Gives form to fancy, and embodies thought.

Sir H. I should not be believ'd in Percy's camp,

If I should tell them that their gallant leader,

The thunder of the war, the bold Northumberland,

Renouncing Mars, dissolv'd in amorous wishes,

Loiter'd in shades, and pined in rosy bowers,

To catch a transient gleam of two bright eyes.

Per. Enough of conquest, and enough of war!

Ambition's cloy'd—the heart resumes its rights.

When England's king, and England's good re-
quir'd,

This arm not idly the keen falchion brandish'd:

Enough—for vaunting misbecomes a soldier.

I live, I am return'd—am near Elwina! [*her;*]

Seest thou those turrets? Yes, that castle holds

But wherefore tell thee this? for thou hast seen her.

How look'd, what said she? Did she hear the tale

Of my imagin'd death without emotion?

Sir H. Percy, thou hast seen the musk-rose,
newly blown,

Disclose its bashful beauties to the sun,

Till an unfriendly, chilling storm descended,

Crush'd all its blushing glories in their prime,

Bow'd its fair head, and blasted all its sweetness;

So droop'd the maid beneath the cruel weight

Of my sad tale.

Per. So tender and so true!

Sir H. I left her fainting in her father's arms,

The dying flower yet hanging on the tree.

Even Raby melted at the news I brought,

And envy'd thee thy glory.

Per. Then I am bless'd!

His hate subdu'd, I've nothing more to fear.

Sir H. My embassy dispatch'd, I left the castle,

Nor spoke to any of Lord Raby's household,

For fear the king should chide the tardiness

Of my return. My joy to find you living

You have already heard.

Per. But where is Harcourt?

Ere this he should have seen her, told her all,

How I surviv'd, return'd—and how I love!

I tremble at the near approach of bliss,

And scarcely can sustain the joy which waits me.

Sir H. Grant, Heaven, the fair one prove but
half so true!

Per. O she is truth itself!

Sir H. She may be chang'd,

Spite of her tears, her fainting, and alarms.

I know the sex, know them as nature made 'em,

Not such as lovers wish, and poets feign.

Per. To doubt her virtue were suspecting Heaven! 'Twere little less than infidelity! [ven,
And yet I tremble. Why does terror shake
These firm-strung nerves? But 'twill be ever thus,
When fate prepares us more than mortal bliss,
And gives us only human strength to bear it.

Sir H. What beam of brightness breaks through
vonder gloom? [comes

Per. Hulbert—she comes! by all my hopes, she
'Tis she—the blissful vision is Elwina! [me!
But ah! what mean those tears?—She weeps for
O transport!—go.—I'll listen unobserv'd,
And for a moment taste the precious joy,
The banquet of a tear which falls for love.

[*Exit Sir HUBERT, PERCY goes into the
boiler.*

Enter ELWINA.

Shall I not weep? and have I then no cause?
If I could break the eternal bands of death,
And wrench the sceptre from his iron grasp;
If I could bid the yawning sepulchre
Restore to life its long committed dust;
If I could teach the slaughtering hand of war
To give me back my dear, my murder'd Percy,
Then I indeed might once more cease to weep.

[*PERCY comes out of the boiler.*

Per. Then cease, for Percy lives.

Elw. Protect me, Heaven!

Per. O joy unspeakable! My life, my love!
End of my toils, and crown of all my cares!
Kind as consenting peace, as conquest bright,
Dearer than arms, and lovelier than renown!

Elw. It is his voice—it is, it is my Percy!
And dost thou live?

Per. I never liv'd till now.

Elw. And did my sighs, and did my sorrows
reach thee?

And art thou come at last to dry my tears?
How did'st thou 'scape the fury of the foe?

Per. Thy guardian genius hover'd o'er the field,
And turn'd the hostile spear from Percy's breast,
Lest thy fair image should be wounded there.
But Harcourt should have told thee all my fate,
How I surviv'd—

Elw. Alas! I have not seen him.
Oh! I have suffer'd much.

Per. Of that no more;
For every minute of our future lives
Shall be so bless'd, that we will learn to wonder
How we could ever think we were unhappy.

Elw. Percy—I cannot speak.

Per. Those tears how eloquent!
I would not change this motionless, mute joy,
For the sweet strains of angels: I look down
With pity on the rest of human kind,
However great may be their fame of happiness,
And think their niggard fate has given them
nothing,

Not giving thee; or, granting some small blessing,
Denies them my capacity to feel it.

Elw. Alas! what mean you?

Per. Can I speak my meaning? [it:
'Tis of such magnitude that words would wrong
But surely my Elwina's faithful bosom
Should beat in kind responses of delight,
And feel, but never question, what I mean.

Elw. Hold, hold, my heart, thou hast much
more to suffer!

Per. Let the slow form, and tedious ceremony,
Wait on the splendid victims of ambition.
Love stays for none of these. Thy father's soften'd,

He will forget the fatal Cheviot chase;
Raby is brave, and I have serv'd my country,
I would not boast, it was for thee I conquer'd;
Then come, my love.

Elw. O never, never, never!

Per. Am I awake? Is that Elwina's voice?

Elw. Percy, thou most ador'd, and most de-
If ever fortitude sustain'd thy soul, [ceiv'd!
When vulgar minds have sunk beneath the stroke,
Let thy imperial spirit now support thee.—
If thou canst be so wondrous merciful,
Do not, O do not curse me!—but thou wilt,
Thou must—for I have done a fearful deed,
A deed of wild despair, a deed of horror.

I am, I am—

Per. Speak, say, what art thou?

Elw. Married!

Per. Oh!

[me;

Elw. Percy, I think I begg'd thee not to curse
But now I do revoke the fond petition.

Speak! ease thy bursting soul; reproach, upbraid,
O'erwhelm me with thy wrongs—I'll bear it all.

Per. Open, thou earth, and hide me from her
sight!

Did'st thou not bid me curse thee?

Elw. Mercy! mercy!

Per. And have I 'scaped the Saracen's fell
Only to perish by Elwina's guilt? [sword
I would have bared my bosom to the foe,
I would have died, had I but known you wish'd it.

Elw. Percy, I lov'd thee most when most I
wrong'd thee;

Yes, by these tears I did.

Per. Married! just Heaven!

Married! to whom? Yet wherefore should
know?

It cannot add fresh horrors to thy crime,
Or my destruction.

Elw. Oh! 'twill add to both.

How shall I tell? Prepare for something dreadful.
Hast thou not heard of—Douglas?

Per. Why, 'tis well!

Thou awful Power, why waste thy wrath on me?
Why arm omnipotence to crush a worm?
I could have fallen without this waste of ruin.
Married to Douglas! By my wrongs, I like it;
'Tis perfidy complete, 'tis finish'd falsehood,
'Tis adding fresh perdition to the sin,
And filling up the measure of offence!

Elw. Oh! 'twas my father's deed! he made his
child

An instrument of vengeance on thy head.

He wept and threaten'd, sooth'd me, and com-
manded.

Per. And you complied, most dutiously com-
plied!

Elw. I could withstand his fury; but his tears,
Ah, they undid me! Percy dost thou know
The cruel tyranny of tenderness?
Hast thou e'er felt a father's warm embrace?
Hast thou e'er seen a father's flowing tears,
And known that thou could'st wipe those tears
away?

If thou hast felt, and hast resisted these,
Then thou may'st curse my weakness; but if not,
Thou canst not pity, for thou canst not judge.

Per. Let me not hear the music of thy voice,
Or I shall love thee still; I shall forget
Thy fatal marriage and my savage wrongs.

Elw. Dost thou not hate me, Percy?

Per. Hate thee? Yes,

As dying martyrs hate the righteous cause

Of that bless'd power for whom they bleed—I
hate thee.

[*They look at each other with silent agony.*]

Enter HARCOURT.

Har. Forgive, my lord, your faithful knight—

Per. Come, Harcourt,

Come, and behold the wretch who once was Percy.

Har. With grief I've learn'd the whole unhappy tale.

Earl Douglas, whose suspicion never sleeps—

Per. What, is the tyrant jealous?

Elw. Hear him, Percy.

Per. I will command my rage—Go on.

Har. Earl Douglas

Knew, by my arms and my accoutrements,
That I belong'd to you; he questioned much,
And much he menac'd me, but both alike
In vain; he then arrested and confin'd me. [it.]

Per. Arrest my knight! The Scot shall answer

Elw. How came you now releas'd?

Har. Your noble father

Obtain'd my freedom, having learn'd from Hubert
The news of Percy's death. The good old lord,
Hearing the king's return, has left the castle
To do him homage.

[*To PERCY.*] Sir, you had best retire;

Your safety is endanger'd by your stay.

I fear should Douglas know—

Per. Should Douglas know!

Why what new magic's in the name of Douglas?

That it should strike Northumberland with fear?

Go, seek the haughty Scot, and tell him—no—

Conduct me to his presence.

Elw. Percy, hold;

Think not 'tis Douglas—'tis—

Per. I know it well—

Thou mean'st to tell me 'tis Elwina's husband;

But that inflames me to superior madness.

This happy husband, this triumphant Douglas,

Shall not insult my misery with his bliss.

I'll blast the golden promise of his joys.

Conduct me to him—nay, I will have way—

Come, let us seek this husband.

Elw. Percy, hear me.

When I was robb'd of all my peace of mind,

My cruel fortune left me still one blessing,

One solitary blessing, to console me;

It was my fame.—'Tis a rich jewel, Percy,

And I must keep it spotless, and unsoil'd:

But thou wouldst plunder what e'en Douglas spar'd,

And rob this single gem of all its brightness.

Per. Go—thou wast born to rule the fate of

Thou art my conqueror still. [Percy.]

Elw. What noise is that?

[*HARCOURT goes to the side of the stage.*]

Per. Why art thou thus alarm'd?

Elw. Alas! I feel

The cowardice and terrors of the wicked,

Without their sense of guilt.

Har. My lord, 'tis Douglas.

Elw. Fly, Percy, and for ever

Per. Fly from Douglas?

Elw. Then stay, barbarian, and at once destroy
My life and fame.

Per. That thought is death. I go:

My honour to thy dearer honour yields.

Elw. Yet, yet thou art not gone!

Per. Farewell, farewell! [*Exit PERCY.*]

Elw. I dare not meet the searching eye of
Douglas.

I must conceal my terrors.

DOUGLAS at the side with his sword drawn,
EDRIC holds him.

Dou. Give me way.

Edr. Thou shalt not enter. [no hell,

Dou. [*Struggling with EDRIC.*] If there were
It would defraud my vengeance of its edge,
And she should live.

[*Breaks from EDRIC and comes forward*
Curs'd chance! he is not here.

Elw. [*Going.*] I dare not meet his fury.

Dou. See she flies

With every mark of guilt.—Go, search the bower,
[*Aside to EDRIC.*]

He shall not thus escape. Madam, return. [*Aloud.*

Now, honest Douglas, learn of her to feign. [*Aside.*
Alone, Elwina? who had just parted hence?

[*With affected composure.*]

Elw. My lord, 'twas Harcourt; sure you must
have met him. [else

Dou. O exquisite dissembler! [*Aside.*] No one

Elw. My lord!

Dou. How I enjoy her criminal confusion!

[*Aside.*]

You tremble, Madam.

Elw. Wherefore should I tremble?

By your permission Harcourt was admitted;

'Twas no mysterious, secret introduction.

Dou. And yet you seem alarm'd.—If Harcourt's
presence

Thus agitates each nerve, makes every pulse

Thus wildly throb, and the warm tides of blood

Mount in quick rushing tumults to your cheek,

If friendship can excite such strong emotions,

What tremors had a lover's presence caus'd?

Elw. Ungenerous man!

Dou. I feast upon her terrors. [*Aside.*

The story of his death was well contriv'd; [*To her.*

But it affects not me; I have a wife,

Compar'd with whom cold Dian was unchaste.

[*Takes her hand.*]

But mark me well—though it concerns not you—

If there's a sin more deeply black than others,

Distinguish'd from the list of common crimes,

A legion in itself, and doubly dear

To the dark prince of hell, it is—hypocrisy.

[*Throws her from him, and exit.*]

Elw. Yes, I will bear this fearful indignation!

Thou melting heart, be firm as adamant;

Ye shatter'd nerves, be strung with manly force,

That I may conquer all my sex's weakness,

Nor let this bleeding bosom lodge one thought,

Cherish one wish, or harbour one desire,

That angels may not hear, and Douglas know.

[*Exit.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—The Hall.

Enter DOUGLAS, his sword drawn and bloody in
one hand, in the other a letter. HARCOURT,
wounded.

Dou. Traitor, no more! this letter shows thy
office.

Twice hast thou robb'd me of my dear revenge.

I took thee for thy leader.—Thy base blood

Would stain the noble temper of my sword;

But as the pander to thy master's lust,

Thou justly fall'st by a wrong'd husband's hand.

Har. Thy wife is innocent.

Dou. Take him away.

Har. Percy, revenge my fall!

[*Guards bear HARCOURT in.*]

Dou. Now for the letter!

He begs once more to see her.—So 'tis plain
They have already met!—but to the rest—

[*Reads.*] "In vain you wish me to restore the scarf;

Dear pledge of love, while I have life I'll wear it,
'Tis next my heart; no power shall force it thence;
Whene'er you see it in another's hand,
Conclude me dead."—My curses on them both!
How tamely I peruse my shame! but thus,
Thus let me tear the guilty characters
Which register my infamy; and thus,
Thus would I scatter to the winds of heaven
The vile complotters of my foul dishonour.

[*Tears the letter in the utmost agitation.*

Enter EDRIC.

Edr. My lord—

Dou. [*In the utmost fury, not seeing* EDRIC.]
'The scarf!

Edr. Lord Douglas.

Dou. [*Still not hearing him.*] Yes, the scarf!
Percy, I thank thee for the glorious thought!
I'll cherish it; 'twill sweeten all my pangs,
And add a higher relish to revenge!

Edr. My lord!

Dou. How! Edric here?

Edr. What new distress? [*shame,*

Dou. Dost thou expect I should recount my
Dwell on each circumstance of my disgrace,
And swell my infamy into a tale?
Rage will not let me—But—my wife is false.

Edr. Art though convinc'd?

Dou. The chronicles of hell!

Cannot produce a falsen.—But what news
Of her cursed paramour?

Edr. He has escap'd.

Dou. Hast thou examin'd every avenue?

Each spot? the grove? the bower, her favourite
Edr. I've search'd them all. [*haunt?*

Dou. He shall be yet pursued.

Set guards at every gate.—Let none depart
Or gain admittance here, without my knowledge.

Edr. What can their purpose be?

Dou. Is it not clear?

Harcourt has raised his arm against my life;
He fail'd; the blow is now reserv'd for Percy;
Then, with his sword fresh recking from my heart,
He'll revel with that wanton o'er my tomb;
Nor will he bring her aught she'll hold so dear,
As the curs'd hand with which he slew her husband.
But he shall die! I'll drown my rage in blood,
Which I will offer as a rich libation
On thy infernal altar, black revenge! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—The Garden.

Enter ELWINA.

Elw. Each avenue is so beset with guards,
And lynx-eyed Jealousy so broad awake,
He cannot pass unseen. Protect him, Heaven!

Enter BIRTHA.

My Birtha, is he safe? has he escap'd? [*to him,*

Bir. I know not. I despatch'd young Harcourt
To bid him quit the castle, as you order'd,
Restore the scarf, and never see you more.
But how the lard injunction was receiv'd,
Or what has happen'd since, I'm yet to learn.

Elw. O when shall I be eas'd of all my cares,
And in the quiet bosom of the grave
Lay down this weary head!—I'm sick at heart!
Should Douglas intercept his flight!

Bir. Be calm;

Douglas this very moment left the castle,
With seeming peace.

Elw. Ah, then, indeed there's danger!
Birtha, whene'er Suspicion feigns to sleep,
'Tis but to make its careless prey secure. [*thee,*

Bir. Should Percy once again entreat to see
'Twere best admit him; from thy lips alone
He will submit to hear his final doom
Of everlasting exile.

Elw. Birtha, no;
If honour would allow the wife of Douglas
To meet his rival, yet I durst not do it.
Percy! too much this rebel heart is thine:
Too deeply should I feel each pang I gave
I cannot hate—but I will banish—thee.
Inexorable duty, O forgive,
If I can do no more!

Bir. If he remains,
As I suspect, within the castle walls,
'Twere best I sought him out.

Elw. Then tell him, Birtha,
But, Oh! with gentleness, with mercy, tell him,
That we must never, never meet again.
The purport of my tale must be severe,
But let thy tenderness embalm the wound
My virtue gives. O soften his despair;
But say—we meet no more.

Enter PERCY.

Rash man, he's here!

[*She attempts to go, he seizes her hand.*

Per. I will be heard; nay, fly not; I will speak;
Lost as I am, I will not be denied
The mournful consolation to complain.

Elw. Percy, I charge thee, leave me.

Per. Tyrant, no:

I blush at my obedience, blush to think
I left thee here alone, to brave the danger
I now return to share.

Elw. That danger's past:
Douglas was soon appeas'd; he nothing knows.
Then, to atone, I conjure thee, nor again
Endarbour my repose. Yet, ere thou goest,
Restore the scarf.

Per. Unkind Elwina, never!

'Tis all that's left me of my buried joys,
All which reminds me that I once was happy.
My letter told thee I would ne'er restore it.

Elw. Letter! what letter?

Per. That I sent by Harcourt.

Elw. Which I ne'er receiv'd. Douglas per-
Who knows? [*happ-*

Bir. Harcourt, t'clude his watchfulness,
Might prudently retire.

Elw. Grant Heaven it prove so!

[*Elwina going, PERCY holds her*
Per. Hear me, Elwina; the most savage honour
Forbids not that poor grace.

Elw. It bids me fly thee. [*part,*

Per. Then, ere thou goest, if we indeed must
To sooth the horrors of eternal exile,
Say but—thou pity'st me!

Elw. [*Weeps.*] O Percy—pity thee!
Imperious honour;—Surely I may pity him.
Yet, wherefore pity? no, I envy thee:
For thou hast still the liberty to weep,
In thee 'twill be no crime; thy tears are guiltless,
For they infringe no duty, stain no honour,
And blot no vow; but mine are criminal,
Are drops of shame which wash the cheek of guilt,
And every tear I shed dishonours Douglas.

Per. I swear my jealous love e'en grudges thee
Thy sad pre-eminence in wretchedness.

Elw. Rouse, rouse, my slum'ring virtue!
Percy hear me.

Heaven, when it gives such high-wrought souls as
Still gives as great occasions to exert them.
If thou wast form'd so noble, great, and gen'rous,
'Twas to surmount the passions which enslave
The gross of human-kind.—Then think, O think,
She, whom thou once didst love, is now another's.

Per. Go on—and tell me that that other's
Douglas.

Elw. Whate'er his name, he claims respect from
His honour's in my keeping, and I hold
The trust so pure, its sanctity is hurt
E'en by thy presence.

Per. Thou again hast conquer'd.
Celestial virtue, like the angel spirit,
Whose flaming sword defended Paradise,
Stands guard on every charm.—Elwina, yes,
To triumph over Douglas, we'll be virtuous.

Elw. 'Tis not enough to be,—we must appear so:
Great souls disdain the shadow of offence,
Nor must thy whiteness wear the stain of guilt.

Per. I shall retract—I dare not gaze upon thee;
My feeble virtue staggers, and again
The fiends of jealousy torment and haunt me.
They tear my heart-strings.—Oh!

Elw. No more;
But spare my injur'd honour the affront
To vindicate itself.

Per. But, love!

Elw. But, glory!

Per. Enough! a ray of thy sublimer spirit
Has warm'd my dying honour to a flame!
One effort and 'tis done. The world shall say,
When they shall speak of my disastrous love,
Percy deserv'd Elwina though he lost her.
Fond tears, blind me not yet! a little longer,
Let my sad eyes a little longer gaze,
And leave their last beams here.

Elw. [Turns from him.] I do not weep.

Per. Not weep? then why those eyes avoiding
mine?
And why that broken voice? those trembling ac-
tish sigh which rends my soul?

Elw. No more, no more.

Per. That pang decides it. Come—I'll die at
Thou Power supreme! take all the length of days,
And all the blessings kept in store for me,
And add to her account.—Yet turn once more,
One little look, one last, short glimpse of day,
And then a long dark night.—Hoid, hold my heart,
O break not yet, while I behold her sweetness;
For after this dear, mournful, tender moment,
I shall have nothing more to do with life.

Elw. I do conjure thee, go.

Per. 'Tis terrible to nature!

With pangs like these the soul and body part!
And thus, but oh, with far less agony,
The poor departing wretch still grasps at being,
Thus clings to life, thus dreads the dark unknown,
Thus struggles to the last to keep his hold;
And when the dire convulsive groan of death
Dislodges the sad spirit—thus it stays,
And fondly hovers o'er the form it lov'd.
Once and no more—farewell, farewell!

Elw. For ever!

[They look at each other for some time, then
exit PERCY. After a pause;

'Tis past—the conflict's past! retire, my Birtha,
I would address me to the throne of grace.

Bir. May Heaven restore that peace thy bosom
wants!

[Exit BIRTHA.]

Elw. [Kneels.] Look down, thou awful, heart-
inspecting Judge,

Look down with mercy on thy erring creature,
And teach my soul the lowliness it needs!
And if some sad remains of human weakness
Should sometimes mingle with my best resolves,
O breathe thy spirit on this wayward heart,
And teach me to repent th' intruding sin
In it's first birth of thought!

[Noise within.] What noise is that?
The clash of swords! should Douglas be return'd!

Enter DOUGLAS and PERCY, fighting.

Dou. Yield, villain, yield.

Per. Not till this good right arm
Shall fail its master.

Dou. This to thy heart, then.

Per. Defend thy own.

[They fight; PERCY disarms DOUGLAS.]

Dou. Confusion, death, and hell!

Edr. [Without.] This way I heard the noise.

Enter EDRIC, and many Knights and Guards,
from every part of the stage.

Per. Cursed treachery!
But dearly will I sell my life.

Dou. Seize on him.

Per. I'm taken in the toils.

[PERCY is surrounded by Guards, who take
his sword.]

Dou. In the cursed snare
Thou laidst for me, traitor, thyself art caught.

Elw. He never sought thy life.

Dou. Adulteress, peace!

The villain Harcourt too—but he's at rest.

Per. Douglas, I'm in thy power; but do not
triumph,

Percy's betray'd, not conquer'd. Come, despatch
Elw. [To DOUGLAS.] O do not, do not kill him!

Per. Madam, forbear;

For by the glorious shades of my great fathers,
Their godlike spirit is not so extinct,
That I should owe my life to that vile Scot.
Though dangers close me round on every side,
And death besets me, I am Percy still.

Dou. Sorceress, I'll disappoint thee—he shall die,
Thy minion shall expire before thy face,
That I may feast my hatred with your pangs,
And make his dying groans, and thy fond tears,
A banquet for my vengeance.

Elw. Savage tyrant!

I would have fallen a silent sacrifice, [thee.
So thou hadst spar'd my fame—I never wrong'd]

Per. She knew not of my coming;—I alone
Have been to blame—Spite of her interdiction,
I hither came. She's pure as spotless saints.

Elw. I will not be excus'd by Percy's crime;
So white my innocence, it does not ask
The shade of others' faults to set it off;
Nor shall he need to sully his fair fame
To throw a brighter lustre round my virtue.

Dou. Yet he can only die—but death for honour!
Ye powers of hell, who take malignant joy
In human bloodshed, give me some dire means,
Wild as my hate, and desperate as my wrongs!

Per. Enough of words. Thou know'st I hate
thee, Douglas;

'Tis steadfast, fix'd, hereditary hate,
As thine for me; our fathers did bequeath it
As part of our unalienable birthright,

Which nought but death can end.—Come, end it here.

Elw. [*Kneels.*] Hold, Douglas, hold!—not for myself I kneel,

I do not plead for Percy, but for thee:

Arm not thy hand against thy future peace,
Spare thy brave breast the tortures of remorse,—
Stain not a life of unpolluted honour,
For, oh! as surely as thou strik'st at Percy,
Thou wilt for ever stab the fame of Douglas.

Per. Finish the bloody work.

Dou. Then take thy wish.

Per. Why dost thou start?

[*PERCY bares his bosom. DOUGLAS advances to stab him, and discovers the scarf.*

Dou. Her scarf upon his breast!

'The blasting sight converts me into stone;
Withers my powers like cowardice or age,
Curdles the blood within my shiv'ring veins
And palsies my bold arm.

Per. [*Ironically to the Knights.*] Hear you, his friends!

Bear witness to the glorious, great exploit,
Record it in the annals of his race,
That Douglas, the renown'd—the valiant Douglas,
Fenc'd round with guards, and safe in his own castle,

Surpris'd a knight unarm'd, and bravely slew him.

Dou. [*Throwing away his dagger.*] 'Tis true
—I am the very stain of knighthood.

How is my glory dimm'd!

Elw. It blazes brighter!

Douglas was only brave—he now is generous!

Per. This action has restor'd thee to thy rank,
And makes thee worthy to contend with Percy.

Dou. Thy joy will be as short as 'tis insulting.
[*To ELWINA.*]

And thou, imperious boy, restrain thy boasting.
Thou hast sav'd my honour, not remov'd my hate,
For my soul loathes thee for the obligation.
Give him his sword.

Per. Now thou'rt a noble foe,
And in the field of honour I will meet thee,
As knight encount'ring knight.

Elw. Stay, Percy, stay,
Strike at the wretched cause of all, strike here,
Here sheathe thy thirsty sword, but spare my husband. [*me,*]

Dou. Turn, Madam, and address those vows to
To spare the precious life of him you love.
Even now you triumph in the death of Douglas;
Now your loose fancy kindles at the thought,
And, wildly rioting in lawless hope,
Indulges the adultery of the mind.

But I'll defeat that wish.—Guards, bear her in.
Nay, do not struggle. [*She is borne in.*]

Per. Let our deaths suffice,
And reverence virtue in that form inshrin'd.

Dou. Provoke my rage no farther.—I have
kindled

The burning torch of never-dying vengeance
At love's expiring lamp.—But mark me, friends,
If Percy's happier genius should prevail,
And I should fall, give him safe conduct hence,
Be all observance paid him.—Go, I follow thee.
[*Aside to EDRIC.*]

Within I've something for thy private ear.
Per. Now shall this mutual fury be appeas'd!

These eager hands shall soon be drench'd in
slaughter!

Yes—like two famish'd vultures snuffing blood,
And panting to destroy, we'll rush to combat;
Vol. I.

Yet I've the deepest, deadliest cause of hate,
I am but Percy, thou'rt—Elwina's husband.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—ELWINA'S Apartment

Elw. Thou who in judgment still remember'st
mercy,

Look down upon my woes, preserve my husband!
Preserve my husband! Ah, I dare not ask it;
My very prayers may pull down ruin on me!
If Douglas should survive, what then becomes
Of—him—I dare not name? And if he conquers,
I've slain my husband. Agonizing state!
When I can neither hope, nor think, nor pray,
But guilt involves me. Sure to know the worst
Cannot exceed the torture of suspense,
When each event is big with equal horror.

[*Looks out.*]

What, no one yet? This solitude is dreadful!
My horrors multiply!

Enter BIRTHA.

Thou messenger of wo!

Bir. Of wo, indeed!

Elw. How, is my husband dead?
Oh, speak!

Bir. Your husband lives.

Elw. Then farewell, Percy
He was the tenderest, truest!—Bless him, Heaven,
With crowns of glory and immortal joys!

Bir. Still are you wrong; the combat is not over.
Stay, flowing tears, and give me leave to speak.

Elw. Thou sayest that Percy and my husband
Then why this sorrow? [*live;*]

Bir. What a task is mine!

Elw. Thou talk'st as if I were a child in grief,
And scarce acquainted with calamity.

Speak out, unfold thy tale, whate'er it be,
For I am so familiar with affliction,
It cannot come in any shape will shock me.

Bir. How shall I speak? Thy husband—

Elw. What of Douglas?

Bir. When all was ready for the fatal combat,
He call'd his chosen knights, then drew his sword,
And on it made them swear a solemn oath,
Confirm'd by every rite religion bids,
That they would see perform'd his last request,
Be it whate'er it would. Alas! they swore.

Elw. What did the dreadful preparation mean?

Bir. Then to their hands he gave a poison'd cup,
Compounded of the deadliest herbs and drugs;
Take this, said he, it is a husband's legacy;
Percy may conquer—and—I have a wife!
If Douglas falls, Elwina must not live.

Elw. Spirit of Herod! Why, 'twas greatly
thought!

'Twas worthy of the bosom which conceiv'd it!
Yet 'twas too merciful to be his own.

Yes, Douglas, yes, my husband, I'll obey thee,
And bless thy genius which has found the means
To reconcile thy vengeance with my peace,
The deadly means to make obedience pleasant.

Bir. O spare, for pity spare, my bleeding heart:
Inhuman to the last! Unnatural poison!

Elw. My gentle friend, what is there in a name?
The means are little where the end is kind.

If it disturb thee, do not call it poison;
Call it the sweet oblivion of my cares,
My balm of wo, my cordial of affliction,
The drop of mercy to my fainting soul,
My kind dismissal from a world of sorrow,

My cup of bliss, my passport to the skies.

Bir. Hark! what alarm is that?

Elw. The combat's over! [*BIRTHA goes out.*]

[*ELWINA stands in a fixed attitude, her hands clasped.*]

Now, gracious Heaven, sustain me in the trial,
And bow my spirit to thy great decrees!

Re-enter BIRTHA.

[*ELWINA looks steadfastly at her without speaking.*]

Bir. Douglas is fallen.

Elw. Bring me the poison.

Bir. Never.

[*approach!*]

Elw. Where are the knights? I summon you—

Draw near, ye awful ministers of fate,
Dire instruments of posthumous revenge!
Come—I am ready; but your tardy justice
Defrauds the injur'd dead.—Go, haste, my friend,
See that the castle be securely guarded,
Let every gate be barr'd—prevent his entrance.

Bir. Whose entrance?

Elw. His—the murderer of my husband.

Bir. He's single, we have hosts of friends.

Elw. No matter;

Who knows what love and madness may attempt?
But here I swear by all that binds the good,
Never to see him more.—Unhappy Douglas!
O if thy troubled spirit still is conscious
Of our past woes, look down, and hear me swear,
That when the legacy thy rage bequeath'd me
Works at my heart, and conquers struggling
Ev'n in that agony I'll still be faithful. [nature,
She who could never love, shall yet obey thee,
Weep thy hard fate, and die to prove her truth.

Bir. O unexampled virtue! [*A noise without.*]

Elw. Heard you nothing?

By all my fears the insulting conqueror comes.
O save me, shield me!

Enter DOUGLAS.

Heaven and earth, my husband!

Dou. Yes—

To blast thee with the sight of him thou hat'st,
Of him thou hast wrong'd, adulteress, 'tis thy
husband. [*mercy,*]

Elw. [*Kneels.*] Bless'd be the fountain of eternal
This load of guilt is spar'd me! Douglas lives!
Perhaps both live! [*To BIRTHA.*] Could I be sure
of that,

The poison were superfluous, joy would kill me.

Dou. Be honest now, for once, and curse thy
stars;

Curse thy detested fate which brings thee back
A hated husband, when thy guilty soul
Revel'd in fond, imaginary joys

With my too happy rival: when thou flew'st,
To gratify impatient, boundless passion,
And join adulterous lust to bloody murder;
Then to reverse the scene! polluted woman!
Mine is the transport now, and thine the pang.

Elw. Whence sprung the false report that thou
had'st fall'n?

Dou. To give thy guilty breast a deeper wound,
To add a deadlier sting to disappointment,
I rais'd it—I contriv'd—I sent it thee. [*virtue.*]

Elw. Thou seest me bold, but bold in conscious
—That my sad soul may not be stain'd with blood,
That I may spend my few short hours in peace,
And die in holy hope of Heaven's forgiveness,
Relieve the terrors of my lab'ring breast,
Say I am clear of murder—say he lives,

Say but that little word, that Percy lives,
And Alps and oceans shall divide us ever,
As far as universal space can part us.

Dou. Canst thou renounce him?

Elw. Tell me that he lives,

And thou shalt be the ruler of my fate,
For ever hide me in a convent's gloom,
From cheerful day-light, and the haunts of men,
Where sad austerity, and ceaseless prayer
Shall share my uncomplaining day between them.

Dou. O, hypocrite! now, Vengeance, to thy
office.

I had forgot—Percy commends him to thee,
And by my hand—

Elw. How—by thy hand?

Dou. Has sent thee

This precious pledge of love.

[*He gives her PERCY's scarf.*]

Elw. Then Percy's dead! [*mine!*]

Dou. He is.—O great revenge, thou now art
See how convulsive sorrow rends her frame!
This, this is transport!—injur'd honour now
Receives its vast, its ample retribution.
She sheds no tears, her grief's too highly wrought;
'Tis speechless agony.—She must not faint—
She shall not 'scape her portion of the pain.
No! she shall feel the fulness of distress,
And wake to keen perception of her loss.

Bir. Monster! Barbarian! leave her to her
sorrows.

Elw. [*In a low broken voice.*] Douglas—think
not I faint, because thou seest

The pale and bloodless cheek of wan despair.

Fail me not yet, my spirits; thou cold heart,

Cherish thy freezing current one short moment,

And bear thy mighty load a little longer.

Dou. Percy, I must avow it, bravely fought,—
Died as a hero should;—but, as he fell,
(Hear it, fond wanton!) call'd upon thy name,
And his last guilty breath sigh'd out—*Elwina!*
Come—give a loose to rage, and feed thy soul
With wild complaints, and womanish upbraidings.

Elw. [*In a low solemn voice.*] No.

The sorrow's weak that wastes itself in words,
Mine is substantial anguish—deep, not loud;
I do not rave—Resentment's the return
Of common souls for common injuries. [*sion;*]
Light grief is proud of state, and courts compas-
But there's a dignity in careless sorrow,
A sullen grandeur which disdains complaint;
Rage is for little wrongs—Despair is dumb.

[*Exeunt ELWINA and BIRTHA.*]

Dou. Why, this is well! her sense of wo is
strong!

[*her,*]
The sharp, keen tooth of gnawing grief devours
Feeds on her heart, and pays me back my pangs.
Since I must perish, 'twill be glorious ruin:
I fall not singly, but, like some proud tower,
I'll crush surrounding objects in the wreck,
And make the devastation wide and dreadful.

Enter RABY.

Raby. O whither shall a wretched father turn,
Where fly for comfort? Douglas, art thou here?
I do not ask for comfort at thy hands.

I'd but one little casket, where I lodged
My precious hoard of wealth, and, like an idiot,
I gave my treasure to another's keeping,
Who threw away the gem, nor knew its value,
But left the plunder'd owner quite a beggar.

Dou. What art thou come to see thy race dis-
honour'd?

And thy bright sun of glory set in blood ?
I would have spar'd thy virtues, and thy age,
The knowledge of her infamy.

Raby. 'Tis false. [blood.]
Had she been base, this sword had drank her

Dou. Ha ! dost thou vindicate the wanton ?

Raby. Wanton ?

Thou hast defam'd a noble lady's honour—
My spotless child—in me behold her champion :
The strength of Hercules will nerve this arm,
When lifted in defence of innocence.
The daughter's virtue for the father's shield,
Will make old Raby still invincible.

[*Offers to draw.*]

Dou. Forbear.

Raby. Thou dost disdain my feeble arm,
And scorn my age.

Dou. There will be blood enough ;
Nor need thy wither'd veins, old lord, be drain'd,
To swell the copious stream.

Raby. Thou wilt not kill her ?

Dou. Oh, 'tis a day of horror !

Enter *EDRIC* and *BIRTHA*.

Edr. Where is Douglas ?

I come to save him from the deadliest crime
Revenge did ever meditate.

Dou. What meanest thou ? [wife.]

Edr. This instant fly, and save thy guiltless

Dou. Save that perfidious—

Edr. That much-injur'd woman.

Bir. Unfortunate indeed, but O most innocent !

Edr. In the last solemn article of death,
That truth-compelling state, when even bad men
Fear to speak falsely, Percy clear'd her fame.

Dou. I heard him.—'Twas the guilty fraud of
love.

The scarf, the scarf ! that proof of mutual passion,
Given but this day to ratify their crimes !

Bir. What means my lord ? This day ? That
fatal scarf

Was given long since, a toy of childish friendship ;
Long ere your marriage, ere you knew *Elwina*.

Raby. 'Tis I am guilty.

Dou. Ha !

Raby. I,—I alone.

Confusion, honour, pride, parental fondness,
Distract my soul,—Percy was not to blame,
He was—the destin'd husband of *Elwina* !
He lov'd her—was belov'd—and I approv'd.
The tale is long.—I chang'd my purpose since,
Forbade their marriage—

Dou. And confirm'd my mis'ry !

Twice did they meet to-day—my wife and Percy.

Raby. I know it.

Dou. Ha ! thou knew'st of my dishonour ?

Thou wast a witness, an approving witness,
At least a tame one !

Raby. Percy came, 'tis true,

A constant, tender, but a guiltless lover !

Dou. I shall grow mad indeed ; a guiltless lover !

Percy, the guiltless lover of my wife ?

Raby. He knew not she was married.

Dou. How ? is't possible ? [cent ;]

Raby. Douglas, 'tis true ; both, both were inno-
He of her marriage, she of his return. [vow'd]

Bir. But now, when we believ'd thee dead, she
Never to see thy rival. Instantly,
Not in a state of momentary passion,
But with a martyr's dignity and calmness,
She bade me bring the poison.

Dou. Had'st thou done it,

Despair had been my portion ! Fly, good *Birtna*,
Find out the suffering saint—describe my peni-
tence,

And paint my vast extravagance of fondness,

Tell her I love as never mortal lov'd—

Tell her I know her virtues, and adore them—

Tell her I come, but dare not seek her presence,

Till she pronounce my pardon.

Bir. I obey.

[*Exit BIRTHA.*]

Raby. My child is innocent ! ye choirs of saints,
Catch the bless'd sounds—my child is innocent !

Dou. O I will kneel, and sue for her forgiveness,
And thou shalt help me plead the cause of love,

And thou shalt weep—she cannot sure refuse
A kneeling husband and a weeping father.

Thy venerable cheek is wet already.

Raby. Douglas ! it is the dew of grateful joy

My child is innocent ! I now would die,

Lest fortune should grow weary of her kindness,
And grudge me this short transport.

Dou. Where, where is she ?

My fond impatience brooks not her delay ;
Quick, let me find her, hush her anxious soul,
And sooth her troubled spirit into peace.

Enter *BIRTHA*.

Bir. O horror, horror, horror !

Dou. Ah ! what mean'st thou ?

Bir. *Elwina*—

Dou. Speak—

Bir. Her grief wrought up to frenzy,
She has, in her delirium, swallow'd poison !

Raby. Frenzy and poison !

Dou. Both a husband's gift ;

But thus I do her justice.

As *DOUGLAS* goes to stab himself, enter *ELWINA*
distracted, her hair dishevelled, *PERCY's scarf*
in her hand.

Elw. [*Goes up to DOUGLAS.*] What, blood
again ? We cannot kill him twice !

Soft, soft—no violence—he's dead already ;—

I did it—Yes—I drown'd him with my tears ;—

But hide the cruel deed ! I'll scratch him out

A shallow grave, and lay the green sod on it ;

Ay—and I'll bind the wild briar o'er the turf,

And plant a willow there, a weeping willow—

[*She sits on the ground.*]

But look you tell not Douglas, he'll disturb him ;

He'll pluck the willow up—and plant a thorn.

He will not let me sit upon his grave,

And sing all day, and weep and pray all night.

Raby. Dost thou not know me ?

Elw. Yes—I do remember

You had a harmless lamb.

Raby. I had indeed !

[mate,

Elw. From all the flock you chose her out a

In sooth a fair one—you did bid her love it—

But while the shepherd slept the wolf devour'd it.

Raby. My heart will break. This is too much,
too much !

Elw. [*Smiling.*] O 'twas a cordial draught—I
drank it all.

Raby. What means my child ?

Elw. The poison ! Oh the poison !

Thou dear wrong'd innocence—

Elw. Off—murderer, off !

Do not defile me with those crimson hands.

[*Shows the scarf.*]

This is his winding sheet—I'll wrap him in it—

I wrought it for my love—there—now I've dress'd
him.

How brave he looks ! my father will forgive him,

He dearly lov'd him once—but that is over.
See where he comes—beware, my gallant Percy,
Ah! come not here, this is the cave of death,
And there's the dark, dark palace of Revenge!
See the pale king sits on his blood-stain'd throne!
He points to me—I come, I come, I come.

[*She faints, they run to her, DOUGLAS takes up his sword and stabs himself.*

Dou. Thus, thus I follow thee.

Edr. Hold thy rash hand!

Dou. It is too late. No remedy but this
Could medicine a disease so desperate.

Raby. Ah, she revives!

Dou. [*Raising himself.*] She lives! bear, bear
me to her!

We shall be happy yet.

[*He struggles to get to her, but sinks down.*
It will not be—

O for a last embrace—Alas! I faint—

She lives—Now death is terrible indeed—

Fair spirit, I lov'd thee—O—Elwina! [*Dies.*

Elw. Where have I been? The damps of
death are on me. [*thus!*

Raby. Look up, my child! O do not leave me
Pity the anguish of thy aged father.

Hast thou forgot me?

Elw. No—you are my father;

O you are kindly come to close my eyes,

And take the kiss of death from my cold lips!

Raby. Do we meet thus?

Elw. We soon shall meet in peace.

I've but a faint remembrance of the past—

But something tells me—O those painful struggles
Raise me a little—there—

[*She seers the body of DOUGLAS.*

What sight is that? [*der'd!*

A sword, and bloody? Ah! and Douglas mur-
Edr. Convinced too late of your unequal'd
virtues, [*wrongs,*

And wrung with deep compunction for your
By his own hand the wretched Douglas fell.

Elw. This adds another, sharper pang to death.

O thou Eternal! take him to thy mercy,
Nor let this sin be on his head, or mine!

Raby. I have undone you all—the crime is mine!

O thou poor injur'd saint, forgive thy father,
He kneels to his wrong'd child.

Elw. Now you are cruel,

Come near, my father, nearer—I would see you,
But mists and darkness cloud my failing sight.

O death! suspend thy rights for one short moment,

Till I have ta'en a father's last embrace—

A father's blessing.—Once—and now 'tis over.

Receive me to thy mercy, gracious Heaven!

[*She dies.*

Raby. She's gone! for ever gone! cold, dead
and cold.

Am I a father? Fathers love their children—

I murder mine! With impious pride I snatch'd

The bolt of vengeance from the hand of Heaven.

My punishment is great—but oh! 'tis just.

My soul submissive bows. A righteous God

Has made my crime become my chastisement.

[*Exeunt.*

In this play the Earl of Guildford has taken in
charge Julia his late friend's daughter. It seems
his son Rivers is in love with her and she with
him but her father so left it in his will that
they should not marry until Rivers had made
a career in military arms. However, he does
and sends Orlando an Italian friend of his, (who
both had saved each other's life) to tell of his
success in war. Orlando is affixed Rivers sister
in marriage and she loves him but he is in
love with Julia and would have left her to
marry his friend Rivers. But Bertrand who is
Guildford's nephew and heir to his estates if
he can get Rivers out of the way the which
he contrives by plotting to make Rivers & Orlando
enemies of each other, the "Fatal Falshood" is
shown. Julia has given Bertrand a letter to take
Rivers but instead of going up to Orlando and
telling him to tell Rivers a mistake is made

us villain! that is killed at which news Emmelina becomes
distracted and at last dies, Then Orlando
struck with remorse kills himself and his
Juliane left to marry.
THE FATAL FALSEHOOD:
A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

AS IT WAS ACTED IN 1779, AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN

A Classical Tragedy.
TO

THE COUNTESS BATHURST,

THIS TRAGEDY IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED, AS A
SMALL TRIBUTE TO HER MANY VIRTUES,
AND AS A
GRATEFUL TESTIMONY OF THE FRIENDSHIP WITH WHICH SHE HONOURS
HER MOST OBEDIENT AND MOST
OBLIGED HUMBLE SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF THE TRAGEDY.—SPOKEN BY MR. HULL.

OUR modern poets now can scarcely choose
A subject worthy of the Tragic Muse;
For bards so well have glean'd th' historic field,
That scarce one sheaf th' exhausted ancients
yield;

Or if, perchance, they from the golden crop
Some grains, with hand penurious, rarely drop;
Our author these consigns to manly toil,
For classic themes demand a classic soil.
A vagrant she, the desert waste who chose,
Where truth and history no restraints impose.
To her the wilds of fiction open lie,
A flow'ry prospect, and a boundless sky;
Yet hard the task to keep the onward way,
Where the wide scenery lures the foot to stray;
Where no severer limits check the Muse
Than lawless fancy is dispos'd to choose.

Nor does she emulate the loftier strains
Which high heroic Tragedy maintains:
Nor conquest she, nor wars, nor triumphs sings,
Nor with rash hand o'erturns the thrones of
kings.

No ruin'd empires greet to-night your eyes,
No nations at our bidding fall or rise;

To statesmen deep, to politicians grave,
These themes, congenial to their tastes, we
leave,

Of crowns and camps, a kingdom's weal or woe,
How few can judge, because how few can know!
But here you all may boast the censor's art,
Here all are critics who possess a heart.
And of the passions we display to-night,
Each hearer judges like the Stagyrte.

The scenes of private life our author shows
A simple story of domestic woes;
Nor unimportant is the glass we hold,
To show the effect of passions uncontrol'd;
For if to govern *realms* belong to few,
Yet all who live have *passions* to subdue.
Self-conquest is the lesson books should preach,
Self-conquest is the theme the stage should
teach.

Vouchsafe to learn this obvious duty here,
The verse though feeble, yet the moral's clear
O mark to-night the unexampled woes
Which from unbounded self-indulgence flows.
Your candour once endur'd our author's lays;
Endure them now—it will be ample praise.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA

— Earl GUILDFORD.
X RIVERS, his son.
— ORLANDO, a young Italian Count.

— BERTRAND.
— EMMELINA, daughter to Guildford.
X JULIA, change to Guildford.

Scene.—Earl GUILDFORD's Castle.

ACT I.

SCENE—An Apartment in Guildford Castle.

Enter BERTRAND.

Ber. What fools are seriously melancholy
villains!

VOL. I.

I play a surer game, and screen my heart
With easy looks and undesigning smiles;
And while my plots still spring from sober
thought,
My deeds appear the effect of wild caprice,
And I the thoughtless slave of giddy chance.

2 M

The exits of ...

What but this frankness could have won the promise

Of young Orlando, to confide to me
That secret grief which preys upon his heart ?
'Tis shallow, indiscreet hypocrisy,
To seem too good : I am the *careless* Bertrand,
The honest, undesigning, plain, blunt man.
The follies I avow cloak those I hide,
For who will search where nothing seems conceal'd ?

'Tis rogues of solid, prudent, grave demeanour,
Excite suspicion ; men on whose dark brow
Discretion, with his iron hand, has grav'd
The deep-mark'd characters of thoughtfulness.
Here comes my uncle, venerable Guildford,
Whom I could honour, were he not the sire
Of that aspiring boy, who fills the gap [thee !
'Twixt me and fortune ;—Rivers, how I hate

Enter GUILDFORD.

How fares my noble uncle ?

Guild. Honest Bertrand !

I must complain we have so seldom met :

Where do you keep ? believe me, we have miss'd you. [me, sir,

Ber. O, my good lord ! your pardon—spare
For there are follies in a young man's life,
And idle thoughtless hours, which I should blush
To lay before your wise and temperate age.

Guild. Well, be it so—youth has a privilege,
And I should be asham'd could I forget
I have myself been young, and harshly chide
This not ungraceful gayety. Yes, Bertrand,
Prudence becomes moroseness, when it makes
A rigid inquisition of the fault,
Not of the man, perhaps, but of his youth.
Foibles that shame the head on which old Time
Has shower'd his snow, are then more pardon-
And age has many a weakness of its own. [able.

Ber. Your gentleness, my lord, and mild re-
proof,

Correct the wanderings of misguided youth,
More than rebuke can shame ine into virtue.

Guild. Saw you my beauteous ward, the
lady Julia ?

Ber. She pass'd this way, and with her your
Your Emmelina. [fair daughter,

Guild. Call them both my daughters ;
For scarce is Emmelina more below'd
Than Julia, the dear child of my adoption.
The hour approaches too, (and, bless it heaven,
With thy benignant, kindest influence !)
When Julia shall indeed become my daughter,
Shall, in obedience to her father's will,
Crown the impatient vows of my brave son,
And richly pay him for his dangers past.

Ber. Oft have I wondered how the gallant
Youthful and ardent, doting to excess, [Rivers,
Could dare the dangers of uncertain war,
Ere marriage had confirmed his claim to Julia.

Guild. 'Twas the condition of her father's will,
My brave old fellow-soldier, and my friend !
He wished to see our ancient houses joined
By this, our children's union ; but the veteran
So highly valued military prowess,
That he bequeath'd his fortunes and his daughter
To my young Rivers, on these terms alone,
That he should early gain renown in arms ;

And if he from the field returned a conqueror,
That sun which saw him come victorious home
Should witness their espousals. Yet he comes
not !

The event of war is to the brave uncertain,
Nor can desert in arms ensure success.

Ber. Yet fame speaks loudly of his early
valour. [Orlando,

Guild. E'er since the Italian count, the young
My Rivers' bosom friend, has been my guest,
The glory of my son is all his theme :
Oh ! he recounts his virtues with such joy,
Dwells on his merit with a zeal so warm,
As to his generous heart pays back again
The praises he bestows.

Ber. Orlando's noble.

He's of a tender, brave, and gallant nature,
Of honour most romantic, with such graces
As charm all womankind.

Guild. And here comes one,
To whom the story of Orlando's praise
Sounds like sweet music.

Ber. What, your charming daughter !
Yes, I suspect she loves the Italian count :

[*Aside.*]

That must not be. Now to observe her closely.

Enter EMMELINA.

Guild. Come hither, Emmelina : we were
speaking

Of the young Count Orlando. What think you
Of this accomplished stranger ?

Em. [*confused.*] Of Orlando !
Sir, as my father's guest, my brother's friend,
I do esteem the count.

Guild. Nay, he has merit
Might justify thy friendship, if he wanted
The claims thou mention'st ; yet I mean to
blame him. [my father !

Em. What has he done ? How has he wrong'd
For you are just, and are not angry lightly ;
And he is mild, unapt to give offence,
As you to be offended.

Guild. Nay, 'tis not much :
But why does young Orlando shun my presence ?
Why lose that cheerful and becoming spirit
Which lately charmed us all ? Rivers will
chide us,

Should he return and find his friend unhappy.
He is not what he was. What says my child ?

Em. My lord, when first my brother's friend
arrived—

Be still, my heart— [*Aside.*]

Ber. She dares not use his name
Her brother's friend ! [*Aside.*]

Em. When first your noble guest
Came from that voyage he kindly undertook
To ease our terrors for my Rivers' safety,
When we believed him dead, he seem'd most
happy,

And shar'd the gen'ral joy his presence gave.
Of late he is less gay ; my brother's absence,
(Or I mistake) disturbs his friend's repose :
Nor is it strange ; one mind informs them both ;
Each is the very soul that warms the other,
And both are wretched or are bless'd together.

Ber. Why trembles my fair cousin ?

Em. Can I think

That my lov'd brother's life has been in danger,
Nor feel a strong emotion!

Ber. (ironically.) Generous pity!
But when that danger has so long been past,
You should forget your terrors.

Em. I shall never;
For when I think that danger sprung from friend-
That Rivers, to preserve another's life, [ship;
Incurr'd this peril, still my wonder rises.

Ber. And why another's life! Why not Or-
lando's!

Such caution more betrays than honest freedom.

Guild. He's still the same, the glibbing, thought-
less Bertrand,

Severe of speech, but innocent of malice.

[*Exit GUILDFORD: EMMELINA going.*]

Ber. Stay, my fair cousin! still with adverse
Am I beheld? Had I Orlando's form, [eyes
I mean, were I like him *your brother's friend*,
Then would your looks be turned thus coldly
on me! [nothing,

Em. But that I know your levity means
And that your heart accords not with your
This would offend me. [tongue,

Ber. Come, confess the truth,
That this gay Florentine, this Tuscan rover,
Has won your easy heart, and given you his:
I know the whole; I'm of his secret council;
He has confess'd—

Em. Ha! what has he confess'd!

Ber. That you are wondrous fair: nay, nothing
farther:

How disappointment fires her angry cheek!

[*Aside.*]

Yourself have told the rest, your looks avow it,
Your eyes are honest, nor conceal the secret.

Em. Know, sir, that virtue no concealment
needs:

So far from dreading, she solicits notice,
And wishes every secret thought she harbours,
Bare to the eye of men, as 'tis to heaven.

Ber. Yet mark me well: trust not Orlando's
truth;

The citron groves have heard his amorous vows
Breath'd out to many a beauteous maid of
Florence;

Bred in those softer climes, his roving heart

Ne'er learn'd to think fidelity a virtue;

He laughs at tales of British constancy.

But see, Orlando comes—he seeks you here.

With eyes bent downwards, folded arms, pale
Disorder'd looks, and negligent attire, [cheeks,
And all the careless equipage of love, [blood
He bends this way. Why does the mounting
Thus crimson your fair cheek? He does not
see us;

I'll venture to disturb his meditations,

And instantly return. [*Exit BERTRAND.*]

Em. No more; but leave me.
He's talkative, but harmless; rude, but honest;
Fuller of mirth than mischief. See, they meet—
This way they come; why am I thus alarm'd!
What is't to me that here Orlando comes?

Oh, for a little portion of that art

Ungenerous men ascribe to our whole sex!

A little artifice were prudence now:

But I have none; my poor unpractis'd heart

Is so unknowing of dissimulation,

So little skill'd to seem the thing it is not,
That if my lips are mute, my looks betray me.

Re-enter BERTRAND with ORLANDO.

Ber. Now to alarm her heart, and search out
his. [*Aside.*]

Or. We crave your pardon, beauteous Em-
melina,

If rudely we intrude upon your thoughts;
Thoughts pure as infants' dreams or angels'
wishes,

And gentle as the breast from which they spring.

Em. Be still, my heart, nor let him see thy
weakness. [*Aside.*]

We are much bound to thank you, cousin Ber-
trand,

That since your late return, the Count Orlando
Appears once more among us. Say, my lord,

Why have you shunn'd your friends' society?
Was it well done? My father bade me chide
you;

I am not made for chiding, but he bade me;

He says, no more you rise at early dawn

With him to chase the boar: I pleaded for you;

Told him 'twas savage sport.

Or. What was his answer?

Em. He said 'twas sport for heroes, and
made heroes;

That hunting was the very school of war,
Taught our brave youth to shine in nobler fields,
Preserv'd them from the rust of dull inaction,
'Train'd them for arms, and fitted them for con-
quest.

Or. O, my fair advocate! scarce can I grieve
To have done wrong, since my offence has
So sweet a pleader. [gain'd

Ber. (aside.) So, I like this well;
Full of respect, but cold.

Em. My lord, your pardon,
My father waits my coming; I attend him. [*Exit.*]

Ber. In truth, my lord, you're a right happy
man;

Her parting look proclaims that you are blest;
The crimson blushes on her cheek display'd

A gentle strife 'twixt modesty and love:

Discretion strove to dash the rising joy,

But conquering love prevail'd and told the tale.

My lord, you answer not.

Or. What shall I say?

Oh, couldst thou read my heart!

Ber. The hour is come

When my impatient friendship claims that trust
Which I so oft have press'd, and you have
promis'd.

Or. I cannot tell thee: 'tis a tale of guilt;
How shall I speak? my resolution sickens;

All virtuous men will shun me, thou wilt scorn
And fly the foul contagion of my crime. [me,

Ber. My bosom is not steel'd with that harsh
prudence

Which would reproach thy failings: tell me all;
The proudest heart loves to repose its faults

Upon a breast that has itself a tincture

Of human weakness: I have frailties too,

Frailties that teach me how to pity thine.

What! silent still? Thou lov'st my beauteous

Have I not guess'd? [cousin!

Or. I own that she has charms
Might warn a frozen stoic into love,
Tempt hermits back again to that bad world
They had renounc'd, and make religious men
Forgetful of their holy vows to heav'n:
Yes, Bertrand—come, I'll tell thee all my weak-
Thou hast a tender, sympathizing heart—[ness;
Thou art not rigid to a friend's defects.
That heavenly form I view with eyes as cold
As marble images of lifeless saints;
I see and know the workmanship divine;
My judgment owns her exquisite perfections,
But my rebellious heart denies her claim.

Ber. What do I hear! you love her not!

Or. Oh! Bertrand!

For pity do not hate me; but thou must,
For am I not at variance with myself?
Yet shall I wrong her gentle, trusting nature,
And spurn the heart I labour'd to obtain?
She loves me, Bertrand: oh! too sure she
loves me: [sion;

Loves me with tenderest, truest, chastest pas-
Loves me, oh, barb'rous fate! as I love—Julia.

Ber. Heard I aright? Did you not speak of
Julia?

Julia! the lovely ward of my good uncle?

Julia! the mistress of your friend, of Rivers?

Or. Go on, go on, and urge me with my guilt;
Display my crime in all its native blackness;
Tell me some legend of infernal falsehood,
Tell me some dreadful tale of perjur'd friends,
Of trust betray'd, of innocence deceiv'd:
Place the dire chronicle before my eyes;
Inflame the horror, aggravate the guilt:
That I may see the evils which await me,
Nor pull such fatal mischiefs on my head,
As with my ruin must involve the fate
Of all I love on earth.

Ber. Just as I wish. (*Aside.*)

Or. Thou know'st I left my native Italy,
Directed hither by the noble Rivers,
To ease his father's fears, who thought he fell
In that engagement where we both were
wounded.

His was a glorious wound, gain'd in the cause
Of gen'rous friendship: for a hostile spear,
Aim'd at my breast, Rivers in his receiv'd,
Sav'd my devoted life, and won my soul.

Ber. So far I knew; but what of Emmelina?

Or. Whether her gentle beauties first allur'd
me,

Or whether peaceful scenes and rural shades,
Or leisure, or the want of other objects,
Or solitude, apt to engender love,
Engag'd my soul, I know not; but I lov'd her.
We were together always, till the habit
Grew into something like necessity.
When Emmelina left me I was sad,
Nor knew a joy till Emmelina came;
Her soft society amus'd my mind,
Fill'd up my vacant heart, and touch'd my soul:
'Twas gratitude, 'twas friendship, 'twas esteem,
'Twas reason, 'twas persuasion,—nay, 'twas

Ber. But where was Julia? [love.

Or. Oh! too soon she came;

For when I saw that wondrous form of beauty,
I stood entranced, like some astronomer,
Who, as he views the bright expanse of heaven,

Finds a new star. I gaz'd, and was undone;
Gaz'd, and forgot the tender Emmelina,
Gaz'd, and forgot the gen'rous, trusting Rivers,
Forgot my faith, my friendship, and my honour.

Ber. Does Julia know your love?

Or. Forbid it, heaven!

What! think'st thou I am so far gone in guilt
As boldly to avow it? Bertrand, no;
For all the kingdoms of the spacious earth,
I would not wrong my friend, or damn my hon-
our. [self.

Ber. Trust me, you think too hardly of your-

Or. Think I have lodg'd a secret in thy breast
On which my peace, my fame, my all depends;
Long have I struggled with the fatal truth,
And scarce have dar'd to breathe it to myself:
For, oh! too surely the first downward step,
The treacherous path that leads to guilty deeds,
Is to make sin familiar to the thoughts. [*Exit.*

Ber. Am I awake? No: 'tis delusion all!

My wildest wishes never soar'd to this;

Fortune anticipates my plot: he loves her.

Loves just whom I would have him love—loves
Julia!

Orlando, yes, I'll play thee at my will;
Poor puppet! thou hast trusted to my hand
The strings by which I'll move thee to thy ruin,
And make thee too the instrument of vengeance,
Of glorious vengeance on the man I hate. [*Exit.*

ACT II.

Enter JULIA and EMMELINA.

Julia. How many cares perplex the maid who
loves!

Cares which the vacant heart can never know.
You fondly tremble for a brother's life;
Orlando mourns the absence of a friend;
Guildford is anxious for a son's renown;
In my poor heart your various terrors meet,
With added fears and fonder apprehensions:
They all unite in me, I feel for all,
His life, his fame, his absence, and his love;
For he may live to see his native home,
And he may live to bless a sister's hopes,
May live to gratify impatient friendship,
May live to crown a father's house with honour,
May live to glory, yet be dead to love.

Em. Forbear these fears; they wound my
brother's honour:

Julia! a brave man must be ever faithful;
Cowards alone dare venture to be false;
Cowards alone dare injure trusting virtue,
And with bold perjuries affront high heaven.

Julia. I know his faith, and venerate his vir-
I know his heart is tender as 'tis brave; [tues;
That all his father's worth, his sister's softness,
Meet in his generous breast—and yet I fear—
Whoever lov'd like me, and did not fear!

Enter GUILDFORD.

Guild. Where are my friends, my daughter?
where is Julia?

How shall I speak the fulness of my heart!

My son, my Rivers, will this day return.

Em. My dearest brother!

Julia. Ha! my Rivers comes!
Propitious heaven!

Em. And yet my Julia trembles.

Julia. Have I not cause ! my Rivers comes !
I dread to ask, and yet I die to hear. [but how ?
My lord—you know the terms—

Guild. He comes a conqueror !
He comes as Guildford's son should ever come !
The battle's o'er, the English arms successful,
And Rivers, like an English warrior, hastes
To lay his laurels at the feet of beauty. [*Exit.*

Julia. My joy oppresses me !

Em. And see, Orlando !
How will the welcome news transport his soul,
And raise his drooping heart ! with caution tell
him,
Lest the o'erwhelming rapture be too much
For his dejected mind.

Enter ORLANDO and BERTRAND.

Julia. My lord Orlando,
Wherefore that troubled air ! no more you dwell
On your once darling theme ; you speak no more
The praises of your Rivers ; is he chang'd !
Is he not still the gallant friend you lov'd,
As virtuous and as valiant ?

Or. Still the same ;
He must be ever virtuous, ever valiant.

Em. If Rivers is the same, then must I think
Orlando greatly chang'd ; you speak not of him,
Nor long for his return, as you were wont.
How did you use to spend the livelong day,
In telling some new wonders of your friend,
Till night broke in upon th' unfinish'd tale ;
And when 'twas o'er, you would begin again,
And we again would listen with delight,
With fresh delight, as if we had not heard it !
Does Rivers less deserve, or you less love ?

Or. Have I not lov'd him ! was my friendship
When any praised his glories in the field ! [cold
My raptur'd heart has bounded at the tale !
Methought I grew illustrious from his glory,
And rich from his renown ; to hear him prais'd,
More proud than if I had achiev'd his deeds,
And reap'd myself the harvest of his fame.
How have I trembled for a life so dear,
When his too ardent soul, despising caution,
Has plung'd him in the foremost ranks of war,
As if in love with danger.

Julia. Valiant Rivers !
How does thy greatness justify my love !

Ber. He's distant far, so I may safely praise
him. [*Aside.*]

I claim some merit in my love of Rivers,
Since I admire the virtues that eclipse me ;
With pleasure I survey those dazzling heights
My gay, inactive temper cannot reach.

Em. Spoke like my honest cousin. Then,
Orlando,
Since such the love you bear your noble friend,
How will your heart sustain the mighty joy
The news I tell will give you ? Yes, Orlando,
Restrain the transports of your grateful friend-
ship,

And hear with moderation, hear me tell you
That Rivers will return—

Or. How ? when ?

Em. This day.

Or. Impossible !

Ber. Then all my schemes are air. [*Aside.*]

Em. To-day I shall embrace my valiant
brother ! [her right !]

Julia. You droop, my lord : did you not hear
She told you that your Rivers would return,
Would come to crown your friendship and our
hopes. [friend ?]

Or. He is most welcome ! Is he not my
You say my Rivers comes. Thy arm, good
Bertrand.

Ber. Joy to us all ; joy to the Count Orlando !
Weak man, take care. [*Aside to ORLANDO.*]

Em. My lord ! you are not well.

Ber. Surprise and joy oppress him ; I myself
Partake his transports. Rouse, my lord, for

Em. How is it with you now ? [shame.

Or. Quite well—'tis past.

Ber. The wonder's past, and naught but joy
remains.

Enter GUILDFORD and RIVERS.

Guild. He's come ! he's here ! I have em-
brace'd my warrior ;
Now take me, heav'n, I have liv'd long enough.

Julia. My lord, my Rivers !

Riv. 'Tis my Julia's self !
My life !

Julia. My hero ! Do I then behold thee ?

Riv. Oh, my full heart ! expect not words,

Em. Rivers ! [my Julia !]

Riv. My sister ! what an hour is this !
My own Orlando, too !

Or. My noble friend !

Riv. This is such prodigality of bliss,
I scarce can think it real. Honest Bertrand,
Your hand ; yours, my Orlando, yours, my
And as a hand, I have a heart for all ; [father ;
Love has enlarg'd it ; from excess of love
I am become more capable of friendship.
My dearest Julia !

Guild. She is thine, my son, [her,
Thou hast deserv'd her nobly ; thou hast won
Fulfill'd the terms—

Riv. Therefore I dare not ask her ;
I would not claim my Julia as a debt,
But take her as a gift ; and, oh ! I swear
It is the dearest, richest, choicest gift,
The bounty of indulgent heaven could grant.

[*GUILDFORD joins their hands.*]

Julia. Spare me, my lord.—As yet I scarce
have seen you.

Confusion stops my tongue—yet I will own,
If there be truth or faith in woman's vows,
Then you have still been present to this heart,
And not a thought has wander'd from its duty.

[*Exeunt JULIA and EMMELINA.*]

Riv. [*looking after Julia.*] Oh, generous Julia !

Or. [*aside to Ber.*] Mark how much she loves
him ! [fond sex have always ready.

Ber. [*aside to Or.*] Mere words, which the
Riv. Forgive me, good Orlando, best of friends !
How my soul joys to meet thee on this shore !
Thus to embrace thee in my much-lov'd Eng-
land ! [of heroes,

Guild. England ! the land of worth, the soil
Where great Elizabeth the sceptre sways,
O'er a free, glorious, rich, and happy people !
Philosophy, not cloister'd up in schools,
The speculative dream of idle monks,

Attir'd in attic robe, here roams at large ;
Wisdom is wealth, and science is renown.
Here sacred laws protect the meanest subject,
The bread that toil procures fair freedom sweet—
And every peasant eats his homely meal [ens,
Content and free, lord of his small domain.

Riv. Past are those Gothic days, and, thanks
to heav'n,

They are for ever past, when English subjects
Were born the vassals of some tyrant lord !
When free-soul'd men were basely handed down
To the next heir, transmitted with their lands,
The shameful legacy, from sire to son ! [boy,

Guild. But while thy generous soul, my noble
Justly abhors oppression, yet revere
The plain stern virtues of our rough forefathers :
O, never may the gallant sons of England
Lose their plain, manly, native character,
Forego the glorious charter nature gave them,
Beyond what kings can give, or laws bestow ;
Their candour, courage, constancy, and truth !

[*Exit GUILDFORD and RIVERS.*]

Or. Stay, Bertrand, stay—Oh, pity my distraction !

This heart was never made to hide its feelings ;
I had near betray'd myself.

Ber. I trembled for you ;
Remember that the eye of love is piercing,
And Emmelina mark'd you.

Or. 'Tis too much :
My artless nature cannot bear disguise.
Think what I felt when unsuspecting Rivers
Press'd me with gen'rous rapture to his bosom,
Profess'd an honest joy, and call'd me friend !
I felt myself a traitor : yet I swear,
Yes, by that Power who sees the thoughts of
I swear, I love the gallant Rivers more [men,
Than light or life ! I love, but yet I fear him :
I shrunk before the lustre of his virtue—
I felt as I had wrong'd him—felt abash'd.
I cannot bear this conflict in my soul,
And therefore have resolv'd—

Ber. On what ?

Or. To fly.

Ber. To fly from Julia ?

Or. Yes, to fly from all,
From every thing I love ; to fly from Rivers,
From Emmelina, from myself, from thee :
From Julia ? no—that were impossible,
For I shall bear her image in my soul ;
It is a part of me, the dearest part ;
So closely interwoven with my being,
That I can never lose the dear remembrance,
Till I am robb'd of life and her together.

Ber. 'Tis cowardice to fly.

Or. 'Tis death to stay.

Ber. Where would you go ? How lost in
thought he stands ! [*Aside.*]
A vulgar villain now would use persuasion,
And by his very earnestness betray
The thing he meant to hide ; I'll coolly wait,
Till the occasion shows me how to act,
Then turn it to my purpose. Ho ! Orlando !
Where would you go ?

Or. To solitude, to hopeless banishment !
Yes, I will shroud my youth in those dark cells
Where disappointment steals devotion's name,
To cheat the wretched votary into ruin ;

There will I live in love with misery ;
Ne'er shall the sight of mirth profane my grief,
The sound of joy shall never charm my ear,
Nor music reach it, save when the slow bell
Wakes the dull brotherhood to lifeless prayer
Then, when the slow-retreating world recedes,
When warm desires are cold, and passion dead,
And all things but my Julia are forgotten,
One thought of her shall fire my languid soul,
Chase the faint orison, and feed despair.

Ber. What ! with monastic, lazy drones retire,
And chant cold hymns with holy hypocrites ?
First perish all the sex ! forbid it, manhood !
Where is your nobler self ! for shame, Orlando,
Renounce this superstitious, whining weakness,
Or I shall blush to think I call'd you friend.

Or. What can I do ? [*riage*]

Ber. [*after a pause.*] Beg she'll defer the marriage
But for one single day ; do this, and leave
The rest to me : she shall be thine.

Or. How sayst thou ?

What, wrong her virtue ?

Ber. Still this cant of virtue !
This pomp of words, this phrase without a
meaning !

I grant that honour's something, manly honour ;
I'd fight, I'd burn, I'd bleed, I'd die for honour ;
But what's this virtue ?

Or. Ask you what it is ?

Why, 'tis what libertines themselves adore ;
'Tis that which wakens love and kindles rapture,
Beyond the rosy lip or starry eye.
Virtue ! 'tis that which gives a secret force
To common charms ; but to true loveliness
Lends colouring celestial. Such its power,
That she who ministers to guilty pleasures,
Assumes its semblance when she most would
Virtue ! 'tis that ethereal energy [please,
Which gives to body spirit, soul to beauty. [*Exit.*]

Ber. Curse on his principles ! Yet I shall
shake them ;

Yes, I will bend his spirit to my will,
Now, while 'tis warm with passion, and will take
Whatever mould my forming hand will give it.
'Tis worthy of my genius ! Then I love
This Emmelina : true, she loves not me,
But, should young Rivers die, his father's lands
Would then be mine—is Rivers, then, immortal ?
Come—Guilford's lands, and his proud daughter's hand,
[genius !
Are worth some thought. Aid me, ye spurs to
Love, mischief, poverty, revenge, and envy !

[*Exit BERTRAND.*]

Enter EMMELINA and RIVERS, talking.

Em. Yet do not blame Orlando, good my
brother ; [lov'd ;
He's still the same, that brave frank heart you
Only his temper's chang'd, he is grown sad ;
But that's no fault, I only am to blame ;
Fond, foolish heart, to give itself away
To one who gave me nothing in return !

Riv. How's this ? my father said Orlando
lov'd thee.

Em. Indeed I thought so ; he was kinder once ;
Nay, still he loves, or my poor heart deceives me.

Riv. If he has wrong'd thee ! yet I know he
could not ;

His gallant soul is all made up of virtues,
And I would rather doubt myself than him.
Yet tell me all the story of your loves,
And let a brother's fondness sooth thy cares.

Em. When to this castle first Orlando came,
A welcome guest to all, to me most welcome;
Yes, spite of maiden shame and burning blushes,
Let me confess he was most welcome to me!
At first my foolish heart so much deceiv'd me,
I thought I lov'd him for my brother's sake;
But when I closely search'd this bosom traitor,
I found, alas! I lov'd him for his own.

Riv. Blush not to own it; 'twas a well-plac'd
I glory in the merit of my friend, [flame!
And love my sister more for loving him.

Em. He talk'd of you; I listen'd with delight,
And fancied 'twas the subject only charm'd me;
But when Orlando chose another theme,
Forgive me, Rivers, but I listen'd still
With undiminish'd joy—he talk'd of love,
Nor was that theme less grateful than the former.
I seem'd the very idol of his soul;
Rivers, he said, would thank me for the friend-
I bore to his Orlando; I believ'd him. [ship
Julia was absent then—but what of Julia?

Riv. Ay, what of her indeed? why nam'd
you Julia?

You could not surely think? no, that were wild.
Why did you mention Julia?

Em. (*confusedly.*) Nay, 'twas nothing,
'Twas accident, nor had my words a meaning;
If I did name her—'twas to note the time—
To mark the period of Orlando's coldness.
The circumstance was casual, and but meant
'To date the change; it aim'd at nothing farther.

Riv. (*agitated.*) 'Tis very like—no more—
I'm satisfied—

You talk as I had doubts: what doubts have I!
Why do you labour to destroy suspicions
Which never had a birth? Is she not mine?
Mine by the fondest ties of dear affection?—
But *did* Orlando change at her return?
Did he grow cold? It could not be for that;
You may mistake. And yet you said 'twas *then*:
Was it *precisely* then? I only ask
For the fond love I bear my dearest sister.

Em. 'Twas as I said. [melina.

Riv. (*recovering himself.*) He loves thee, Em-
These starts of passion, this unquiet temper,
Betray how much he loves thee: yes, my sister,
He fears to lose thee, fears his father's will
May dash his rising hopes, nor give thee to him.

Em. Oh, flatterer! thus to sooth my easy
With tales of possible, unlikely bliss! [nature
Because it *may* be true, my credulous heart
Whispers it is, and fondly loves to cherish
The feeble glimmering of a sickly hope. [age

Riv. This precious moment, worth a tedious
Of vulgar time, I've stol'n from love and Julia;
She waits my coming, and a longer stay
Were treason to her beauty and my love.

Doubts vanish, fears recede, and fondness
triumphs. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE—A Garden.

Em. Why do my feet unbidden seek this
grove!

Why do I trace his steps? I thought him here
This is his hour of walking, and these shades
His daily haunt: oft have they heard his vows:
Ah! fatal vows, which stole my peace away!
But now he shuns my presence: yet who knows,
He may not be ungrateful, but unhappy!
Yes, he will come to clear his past offences,
With such prevailing eloquence will plead,
So mourn his former faults, so blame his cold-
ness,

And by ten thousand graceful ways repair them,
That I shall think I never was offended.

He comes, and every doubt's at once dispell'd:
'Twas fancy all; he never meant to wrong me.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. Why at this hour of universal joy, [ture,
When every heart beats high with grateful rap-
And pleasure dances her enchanting round;
O, tell me why, at this auspicious hour,
You quit the joyful circle of your friends:
Rob social pleasure of its sweetest charm,
And leave a void e'en in the happiest hearts,
An aching void which only you can fill?
Why do you seek these unrequited shades?
Why court these gloomy haunts, unfit for beauty,
But made for meditation and misfortune?

Em. I might retort the charge, my lord Or-
lando!

I might inquire how the lov'd friend of Rivers,
Whom he has held deep-rooted in his heart
Beyond a brother's dearness, sav'd his life,
And cherish'd it when sav'd beyond his own;—
I might inquire, why, when this Rivers comes,
After long tedious months of expectation,
Alive, victorious, and as firm in friendship
As fondness could have wish'd, or fancy feign'd.
I might inquire why thus Orlando shuns him—
Why thus he courts this melancholy gloom,
As if he were at variance with delight,
And scorn'd to mingle in the general joy?

Or. Oh, my fair monitress! I have deserv'd
Your gentle censure. Henceforth I'll be gay.

Em. Julia complains too of you.

Or. Ah! does Julia?

If Julia chides me, I have err'd indeed:
For harshness is a stranger to her nature. [fore?
But why does she complain? O, tell me where-
That I may soon repair the unwilling crime,
And prove my heart at least ne'er meant to

Em. Why so alarm'd? [wrong her.

Or. Alarm'd!

Em. Indeed, you seem'd so.

Or. Sure you mistake. Alarm'd! oh no, I
was not;

There was no cause—I could not be alarm'd
Upon so slight a ground. Something you said,
But what, I know not, of your friend.

Em. Of Julia?

Or. That Julia was displeas'd—was it not so?
'Twas that, or something like it.

Em. She complains

That you avoid her.

Or. How! that I avoid her?
Did Julia say so? ah! you had forgot—
It could not be.

Em. Why are you terrified?

Or. No.

Not terrified—I am not—but were those [ing ;
Her very words ! you might mistake her mean-
Did Julia say Orlando shunn'd her presence !
Oh ! did she, could she say so ?

Em. If she did,
Why this disorder ? there's no cause.

Or. No cause ?
Oh ! there's a cause of dearer worth than em-
pire !

Quick let me fly, and find the fair upbraider ;
Tell her she wrongs me, tell her I would die
Rather than meet her anger. (*EMMELINA faints.*)

Ah, she faints !
What have I said ? curse my imprudent tongue !
Look up, sweet innocence ! my Emmelina—
My gentle friend, awake ! look up, fair creature !
'Tis your Orlando calls.

Em. Orlando's voice !
Methought he talked of love—nay, do not mock
My heart is but a weak, a very weak one ! [me ;
I am not well—perhaps I've been to blame.
Spare my distress ; the error has been mine.

[*Exit EMMELINA.*

Or. So then, all's over ; I've betrayed my
secret,

And stuck a poison'd dagger to her heart,
Her innocent heart. Why, what a wretch am I !
Ruin approaches—shall I tamely meet it,
And dally with destruction till it blast me ?
No, I will fly thee, Julia, fly for ever.
Ah, fly ! what then becomes of Emmelina ?
Shall I abandon *her* ? it must be so ;
Better escape with this poor wreck of honour
Than hazard all by staying. Rivers here ?

Enter RIVERS.

Riv. The same. My other self ! my own
Orlando !

I came to seek thee ; 'twas in thy kind bosom,
My suffering soul reposed its secret cares,
When doubts and difficulties stood before me :
And now, now when my prosperous fortune
shines,

And gilds the smiling hour with her bright beams,
Shall I become a niggard of my bliss,
Defraud thee of thy portion of my joys, [them ?
And rob thee of thy well-earn'd claim to share

Or. That I have ever lov'd thee, witness
Heaven ! [sing

That I have thought thy friendship the best bless-
That mark'd the fortune of my happier days,
I here attest the sovereign Judge of hearts !
Then think, O think what anguish I endure,
When I declare, in bitterness of spirit,
That we must part—

Riv. What does Orlando mean ?

Or. That I must leave thee, Rivers ; must
Thy lov'd society. [renounce

Riv. Thou hast been injur'd ;
Thy merit has been slighted : sure, my father,
Who knew how dear I held thee, would not
wrong thee.

Or. He is all goodness ; no—there is a cause—
Seek not to know it.

Riv. Now, by holy friendship !
I swear thou shalt not leave me ; what, just now,
When I have safely pass'd so many perils,
Escap'd so many deaths, return'd once more

To the kind arms of long desiring friendship,
Just now, when I expected such a welcome.
As happy souls in paradise bestow
Upon a new inhabitant, who comes
To taste their blessedness, you coldly tell me
You will depart : it must not be, Orlando.

Or. It must, it must.

Riv. Ah, must ! then tell me wherefore ?

Or. I would not dim thy dawn of happiness,
Nor shade the brighter beams of thy good fortune
With the dark sullen cloud that hangs o'er mine.

Riv. Is this the heart of him I call'd my
friend,

Full of the graceful weakness of affection !
How have I known it bend at my request !
How lose the power of obstinate resistance,
Because his friend entreated ! This Orlando !
How is he chang'd !

Or. Alas, how chang'd, indeed !

How dead to every relish of delight !

How chang'd in all but in his love for thee !

Yet think not that my nature is grown harder,

That I have lost that ductile, yielding heart ;

Rivers, I have not—oh ! 'tis still too soft ;

E'en now it melts, it bleeds in tenderness—

Farewell ! I dare not trust myself—farewell !

Riv. Then thou resolv'st to go !

Or. This very day !

Riv. What do I hear ! To-day ! It must not

This is the day that makes my Julia mine. [be.

Or. Wed her to-day !

Riv. This day unites me to her ;

Then stay at least till thou behold'st her mine.

Or. Impossible ! another day were ruin.

Riv. Then let me fly to Julia, and conjure her

To bless me with her hand this hour—this

Or. Oh ! no, no, no ! [moment,

Riv. I will : in such a cause

Surely she will forego the rigid forms

Of cold decorum ; then, my best Orlando !

I shall receive my Julia from thy hand ;

The blessing will be doubled ! I shall owe

The precious gift of love to sacred friendship !

Or. Canst thou bear this, my heart ?

Riv. Then, my Orlando,

Since thy unkind reserve denies my heart

Its partnership in this thy hoard of sorrows,

I will not press to know it ; thou shalt go

Soon as the holy priest has made us one :

For, oh ! 'twill sooth thee in the hour of parting,

To know I'm in possession of my love,

To think I'm blest with Julia, to reflect

Thou gav'st her to my arms, my bride ! my wife !

Or. Ah ! my brain turns !

Riv. 'Tis as I thought ; I'll try him.

[*Aside.*]

Now answer me, Orlando, and with truth ;

Hide nothing from thy friend—dost thou not

love ? [heart.

Or. Ha ! how ! I am betray'd ! he reads my

Riv. Hast thou, with all that tenderness of

soul,

From love's infection kept thy yielding heart ?

Say, couldst thou bask in all the blaze of beauty,

And never feel its warmth ?—Impossible !

Oh ! I shall probe thy soul, till thou confess

The conqu'ring fair one's name—but why con-

Come. come, I know full well— [fess !

Or. Ha! dost thou know!
And knowing, dost thou suffer me to live!
And dost thou know my guilt, and call me friend?
He mocks but to destroy me!

Riv. Come, no more:
Love is a proud, an arbitrary god,
And will not choose as rigid fathers bid;
I know that thine has destin'd for thy bride
A Tuscan maid; but hearts disdain all force.

Or. How's this? what, dost thou justify my passion!

Riv. Applaud it—glory in it—will assist it.
She is so fair, so worthy to be lov'd,
That I should be thy rival, were not she
My sister.

Or. How!

Riv. She is another Julia.

Or. I stood upon a fearful precipice—
I'm giddy still—oh, yes! I understand thee—
Thy beauteous sister! what a wretch I've been!
Oh, Rivers! too much softness has undone me.
Yet I will never wrong the maid I love,
Nor injure thee; first let Orlando perish!

Riv. Be more explicit.

Or. For the present spare me.
Think not too hardly of me, noble Rivers!
I am a man, and full of human frailties;
But hate like hell the crime which tempts me on.
When I am ready to depart I'll see thee,
Clear all my long accounts of love and honour,
Remove thy doubts, embrace thee, and expire.
[Exit ORLANDO.]

Manet RIVERS.

Riv. It must be so—to what excess he loves her!
Yet therefore not demand her! for his birth
May claim alliance with the proudest fortune.
Sure there's some hidden cause—perhaps—ah,
no! [suspicion;
Turn from that thought, my soul! 'twas vile
And I could hate the heart which but conceiv'd it.
'Tis true their faiths are different—then his
father,
Austere and rigid, dooms him to another.
That must not be—these bars shall be remov'd;
I'll serve him with my life, nor taste of bliss
Till I have sought to bless the friend I love.
[Exit.]

Re-enter ORLANDO.

Or. Wed her to-day! wed her perhaps this hour!
Hasten the rites for me? I give her to him!
I stand a tame spectator of their bliss!
I live a patient witness of their joy! [blood.
First let this dagger drink my heart's warm
(Takes a dagger from his bosom, then sees JULIA.)
The sorceress comes! oh, there's a charm about
her [live.
Which holds my hand, and makes me wish to
I shudder at her sight! open, thou earth,
And save me from the peril of her charms!
(Puts up the dagger.)

Enter JULIA.

Julia. Methought I heard the cry of one in pain;
VOL. I.

From hence it came; ah, me! my lord Orlando!
What means that sigh! that agonizing voice?
Those groans which rend your heart! those
frantic looks?

Indeed I'm terrified. What would you do?

Or. (furiously.) Die!

Julia. Talk you of death? renounce the fatal
Live for my sake, Orlando. [thought;

Or. For thy sake!
That were indeed a cause to live for ages,
Would nature but extend the narrow limits
Of human life so far.

Julia. And for the sake
Of Rivers; live for both; he sends me here
To beg you would delay your purpos'd parting;
His happiness, he swears, if you are absent,
Will be but half complete.

Or. Is it to-night?

This marriage, Julia, did you say to-night?

Julia. It is, and yet you leave us.

Or. No.—I'll stay.
Since you command, stay and expire before you.

Julia. What mean you?

Or. That I'll perish at the feet
Of—Rivers.

Julia. Tell your sorrows to my lord;
Upon his faithful breast repose the weight
That presses you to earth.

Or. Tell him? Tell Rivers?
Is he not yours? Does not the priest now wait
To make you one! Then do not mock me thus:
What leisure can a happy bridegroom find
To think upon so lost a wretch as I am?
You hate me, Julia.

Julia. Hate you! how you wrong me!
Live to partake our joy.

Or. Hope you for joy?

Julia. Have I not cause? Am I not lov'd
by Rivers?

Rivers, the best, the bravest of his sex!
Whose valour fabled heroes ne'er surpass'd,
Whose virtues teach the young and charm the
Whose graces are the wonder of our sex, [old;
And envy of his own.

Or. Enough! enough!

O spare this prodigality of praise.
But, Julia, if you would not here behold me
Stretch'd at your feet a lifeless bloody corpse,
Promise what I shall now request.

Julia. What is it?

Or. That till to-morrow's sun, I ask no longer,
You will defer this marriage.

Julia. Ah! defer it!

Impossible; what would my Rivers think!

Or. No matter what; 'tis for his sake I ask it:
His peace, his happiness, perhaps his life
Depends on what I ask.

Julia. His life! the life of Rivers!
Some dreadful thought seems lab'ring in your
Explain this horrid mystery. [breast;

Or. I dare not.

If you comply, before to-morrow's dawn,
All will be well, the danger past: then finish
These—happy nuptials: but if you refuse,
Tremble for him you love; the altar's self
Will be no safeguard from a madman's rage.

Julia. What rage! what madman! what remorseless villain!

Orlando—will not you protect your friend?
Think how he loves you—he would die for you—
Then save him, on my knees I beg you save
him— (Kneels.)

Oh! guard my Rivers from this bloody foe.

Or. Dearer than life I love him—ask no more,
But promise in the awful face of heaven,
To do what I request—and promise further,
Not to disclose the cause.

Julia. Oh, save him! save him!

Or. 'Tis to preserve him that I ask it: promise,
Or see me fall before you.

(He draws the dagger, she still kneeling.)

Julia. I do promise.

Hide, hide that deadly weapon—I do promise.

(Rises.)

How wild you look! you tremble more than I.
I'll call my Rivers hither.

Or. Not for worlds.

If you have mercy in your nature, Julia,
Retire. Oh, leave me quickly to myself;
Do not expose me to the strong temptation
Which now assaults me.—Yet you are not gone.

Julia. Be more composed; I leave you with
regret. [its seat!]

(As she goes out.) His noble mind is shaken from
What may these transports mean? heav'n guard
my Rivers!

As JULIA goes out, enter BERTRAND; he speaks
behind.

Ber. Why, this is well; this has a face; she
weeps,

He seems disorder'd.—Now, to learn the cause,
And then make use of what I hear by chance,
As of a thing I knew. (He listens.)

Or. (after a pause.) And is she gone?
Her parting words shot fire into my soul;
Did she not say she left me with regret?
Her look was tender, and the starting tear
Fill'd her bright eye; she left me with regret—
She own'd it too.

Ber. 'Twill do.

(Comes forward.) What have you done?
The charming Julia is dissolv'd in wo;
Her radiant eyes are quench'd in floods of tears;
For you they fall; her blushes have confess'd it.

Or. For me? what sayst thou? Julia weep
for me!

Yet she is gentle, and she would have wept
For thee; for any who but seem'd unhappy.

Ber. Ungrateful!

Or. How?

Ber. Not by her tears, I judge,
But by her words, not meant for me to hear.

Or. What did she say? What didst thou
hear, good Bertrand!

Speak—I'm on fire.

Ber. It is not safe to tell you.
Farewell! I would not injure Rivers.

Or. Stay,

Or tell me all, or I renounce thy friendship.

Ber. That threat unlocks my tongue; I must
not lose thee.

Sweet Julia wept, clasp'd her fair hands, and
Why was I left a legacy to Rivers, [cried,
Robb'd of the power of choice? Seeing me
she started,

Would have recall'd her words, blush'd, and
retir'd. [my ruin.]

Or. No more; thou shalt not tempt me to
Deny what thou hast said, deny it quickly.

Ere I am quite undone; for, oh! I feel
Retreating virtue touches its last post,
And my lost soul now verges on destruction.

Bertrand! she promis'd to defer the marriage.

Ber. Then my point's gain'd; that will make
Rivers jealous. (Aside.)

She loves you.

Or. No; and even if she did
I have no hope.

Ber. You are too scrupulous.
Be bold, and be successful; sure of this,
There is no crime a woman sooner pardons
Than that of which her beauty is the cause.

Or. Shall I defraud my friend? he bled to
gain her!

What! rob the dear preserver of my life
Of all that makes the happiness of his?
And yet her beauty might excuse a falsehood,
Nay, almost sanctify a perjury.

Perdition's in that thought—'twas born in hell.
My soul is up in arms, my reason's lost,
And love, and rage, and jealousy, and honour,
Pull my divided heart, and tear my soul. [Exit.]

Monet BERTRAND.

Ber. Rave on, and beat thy wings; poor
bird! thou'rt lim'd,

And vain will be thy struggles to get loose.
How much your very honest men lack *prudence*!

Though all the nobler virtues fill one scale,
Yet place but indiscretion in the other,
In worldly business, and the ways of men,
That single folly weighs the balance down,
While all the ascending virtues kick the beam.

Here's this Orlando now, of rarest parts,
Honest, heroic, generous, frank, and kind,
As inexperience of the world can make him;
Yet shall this single weakness, this *imprudence*,
Pull down unheard-of plagues upon his head,
And snare his heedless soul beyond redemption;
While dull, unfeeling hearts, and frozen spirits,
Sordidly safe, secure because untempted,
Look up, and wonder at the generous crime
They wanted wit to frame, and souls to dare.

ACT IV.

SCENE—An Apartment.

Em. How many ways there are of being
wretched!

The avenues to happiness how few!
When will this busy, fluttering heart be still?
When will it cease to feel and beat no more?
E'en now it shudders with a dire presage
Of something terrible it fears to know.

Ent'ring, I saw my venerable father
In earnest conference with the Count Orlando;
Shame and confusion fill'd Orlando's eye,
While stern resentment fir'd my father's cheek.
And look, he comes, with terror on his brow!
But, O! he sees me, sees his child; and now
The terror of his look is lost in love,
In fond, paternal love.

Enter GUILDFORD.

Guild. Come to my arms,
And there conceal that penetrating eye,
Lest it should read what I would hide for ever,
Would hide from all, but most would hide from
thee—

Thy father's grief, his shame, his rage, his tears.

Em. Tears! heaven and earth! see if he
does not weep! [my eyes

Guild. He who has drawn this sorrow from
Shall pay me back again in tears of blood.
'Tis for thy sake I weep.

Em. Ah, weep for me!
Hear, heaven, and judge; hear, heaven, and
If any crime of mine— [punish me!

Guild. Thou art all innocence;
Just what a parent's fondest wish would frame;
No fault of thine e'er stain'd thy father's cheek;
For if I blush'd, it was to hear thy virtues,
And think that thou wast mine; and if I wept,
It was from joy and gratitude to heaven,
That made me father of a child like thee.

Orlando—
Em. What of him?
Guild. I cannot tell thee;
An honest shame, a virtuous pride forbids.

Em. Oh, speak! [father?
Guild. Canst thou not guess, and spare thy

Em. 'Tis possible I can—and yet I will not:
Tell me the worst while I have sense to hear.
Thou wilt not speak—nay, never turn away;
Dost thou not know that fear is worse than grief?
There may be bounds to grief, fear knows no
bounds;

In grief we know the worst of what we feel,
But who can tell the end of what we fear?
Grief inourns some sorrow palpable and known,
But fear runs wild with horrible conjecture.

Guild. Then hear the worst, and arm thy soul
to bear it.

My child!—he has—Orlando has refus'd thee.

Em. (after a long pause.) 'Tis well—'tis very
well—'tis as it should be. [wo,

Guild. Oh, there's an eloquence in that mute
Which mocks all language. Speak, relieve thy
heart,

Thy bursting heart; thy father cannot bear it.
Am I a man? no more of this, fond eyes!
I am grown weaker than a chidden infant,
While not a sigh escapes to tell thy pain.

Em. See, I am calm; I do not shed a tear;
The warrior weeps, the woman is a hero!

Guild. (embraces her.) My glorious child!
now thou art mine indeed!

Forgive me if I thought thee fond and weak.
I have a Roman matron for my daughter,
And not a feeble girl. And yet I fear,
For, oh! I know thy tenderness of soul,
I fear this silent anguish but portends
Some dread convulsion soon to burst in horrors.

Em. I will not shame thy blood; and yet,
my father,

Methinks thy daughter should not be refus'd!
Refus'd! It is a harsh, ungrateful sound;
Thou shouldst have found a softer term of scorn.
And have I then been held so cheap? Refus'd?
Been treated like the light ones of my sex,
Held up to sale! been offer'd, and refus'd!

Guild. Long have I known thy love. I
thought it mutual;

I met him—talk'd of marriage—

Em. Ah! no more:

I am rejected;—does not that suffice?

Excuse my pride the mortifying tale;

Spare me particulars of how and when,

And do not parcel out thy daughter's shame.

No flowers of rhetoric can change the fact,

No arts of speech can varnish o'er my shame;

Orlando has refus'd me.

Guild. Villain! villain!

He shall repent this outrage.

Em. Think no more on't:

I'll teach thee how to bear it; I'll grow proud,

As gentle spirits still are apt to do

When cruel slight or killing scorn assails them

Come, virgin dignity, come, female pride,

Come, wounded modesty, come, slighted love,

Come, conscious worth, come too, O black
despair!

Support me, arm me, fill me with my wrongs!

Sustain this feeble spirit! Yes, my father,

But for thy share in this sad tale of shame,

I think I could have borne it.

Guild. Thou hast a brother;

He shall assert thy cause.

Em. First strike me dead—

No, in the wild distraction of my spirit,

In this dread conflict of my breaking heart,

Hear my fond pleading—save me from that
curse;

Thus I adjure thee by the dearest ties (*kneels*)

Which link society; by the sweet names

Of parent and of child; by all the joys

These tender chains have yielded, I adjure thee

Breathe not this fatal secret to my brother;

Let him not know his sister was refus'd!

O, spare me that consummate, perfect ruin!

Conceive the mighty wo—I cannot speak:

And tremble to become a childless father.

[Exit EMMELINA.

Guild. What art thou, life? thou lying vanity!

Thou promiser, who never mean'st to pay!

This beating storm will crush my feeble age!

Yet let me not complain; I have a son,

Just such a son as heaven in mercy gives,

When it would bless supremely; he is happy;

His ardent wishes will this day be crown'd;

He weds the maid he loves; in him, at least,

My soul will yet taste comfort.—See, he's here;

He seems disorder'd.

Enter RIVERS (not seeing GUILDFORD.)

Riv. Yes, I fondly thought

Not all the tales which malice might devise,

Not all the leagues combined hell might form,

Could shake her steady soul.

Guild. What means my son!

Where is thy bride?

Riv. O, name her not!

Guild. Not name her!

Riv. No, if possible, not think of her;

Would I could help it!—Julia! oh, my Julia!

Curse my fond tongue! I said I would not name

I did not think to do it, but my heart [her;

Is full of her idea; her lov'd image

So fills my soul, it shuts out other thoughts;

My lips resolving not to frame the sound,
Dwell on her name, and all my talk is Julia!

Guild. 'Tis as it should be; ere the mid-
night bell

Sound in thy raptured ear, this charming Julia
Will be thy wife.

Riv. No.

Guild. How?

Riv. She has refused.

Guild. Sayst thou?

Riv. She has.

Guild. Why, who would be a father!

Who that could guess the wretchedness it brings,
But would entreat of heaven to write him child-
less!

Riv. 'Twas but a little hour ago we parted,
As happy lovers should; but when again
I sought her presence, with impatient haste,
Told her the priest, the altar, all was ready;
She blushed, she wept, and vowed it could not be;
That reasons of importance to our peace
Forbade the nuptial rites to be performed
Before to-morrow.

Guild. She consents to-morrow!
She but defers the marriage, not declines it.

Riv. Mere subterfuge! mere female artifice!
What reason should forbid our instant union?
Wherefore to-morrow! wherefore not to-night?
What difference could a few short hours have
made?

Or if they could, why not avow the cause?

Guild. I have grown old in camps, have lived
in courts;

The toils of bright ambition have I known,
Woo'd greatness and enjoy'd it, till disgust
Follow'd possession; still I fondly look'd
Through the false perspective for distant joy,
Hop'd for the hour of honourable ease,
When, safe from all the storms and wrecks of
My shatter'd bark at rest, I might enjoy [fate,
An old man's blessings, liberty and leisure,
Domestic happiness and smiling peace.
The hour of age indeed is com'd! I feel it;
Feel it in all its sorrows, pains, and cares;
But where, oh where's th' untasted peace it
promis'd? [Exit GUILDFORD.

Riv. I would not deeper wound my father's
peace;

But hide the secret cause of my resentment,
Till all be known; and yet I know too much.
It must be so—his grief, his sudden parting:
Fool that I was, not to perceive at once—
But friendship blinded me, and love betray'd.
Bertrand was right, he told me she was changed,
And would, on some pretence, delay the mar-
riage;

I hop'd 'twas malice all.—Yonder she comes,
Dissolved in tears; I cannot see them fall,
And be a man; I will not, dare not meet her;
Her blandishments would sooth me to false
peace,

And if she asked it, I should pardon all. [Exit.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. Stay, Rivers! stay, barbarian! hear
me speak!

Return, inhuman!—best belov'd! return:
Oh, I will tell thee all, restore thy peace,

Kneel at thy feet, and sue for thy forgiveness.
He hears me not—alas! he will not hear.
Break, thou poor heart, since Rivers is unkind.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. Julia in tears!

Julia. Alas! you have undone me!
Behold the wretched victim of her promise!

I urged, at your request, the fatal suit
Which has destroy'd my peace; Rivers sus-
And I am wretched! [pects me,

Or. Better 'tis to weep
A temporary ill, than weep for ever;
That anguish must be mine.

Julia. Ha! weep for ever!
Can they know wretchedness, who know not
love! [honour!

Or. Not love! oh cruel friendship! tyrant

Julia. Friendship! alas, how cold art thou
to love!

Or. Too well I know it; both alike destroy me,
I am the slave of both, and, more than either,
The slave of honour.

Julia. If you then have felt
The bitter agonies—

Or. Talk you of agonies?
You who are lov'd again! No! they are mine,
Mine are the agonies of hopeless passion;
Yes, I do love—I dote, I die for love!

(falls at her feet.) Julia!

Julia. How?

Or. Nay, never start—I know I am a villain!
I know thy hand is destin'd to another,
That other too my friend, that friend the man
To whom I owe my life! Yes, I adore thee;
Spite of the black ingratitude, adore thee;
I dote upon my friend, and yet betray him;
I'm bound to Emmelina, yet forsake her;
I honour virtue, while I follow guilt;
I love the noble Rivers more than life,
But Julia more than honour.

Julia. Hold! astonishment
Has seal'd my lips; whence sprung this mon-

Or. (rises.) From despair. [strous daring!

Julia. What can you hope from me?
Or. Hope! nothing.

I would not aught receive, aught hope but death.
Think'st thou I need reproach? think'st thou I
To be reminded that my love's a crime? [need
That every moral tie forbids my passion!
But though I know that heaven has plagues in
store,

Yet mark—I do not, will not, can't repent;
I do not even wish to love thee less;
I glory in my crime: pernicious beauty!
Come, triumph in thy power, complete my woes;
Insult me with the praises of my rival,
The man on earth—whom most I ought to love!

Julia. I leave thee to remorse, and to that
Thy crime demands. (going.) [penitence

Or. A moment stay.

Julia. I dare not.

Or. Hear all my rival's worth, and all my
The unsuspecting Rivers sent me to thee, [guilt.
To plead his cause; I basely broke my trust,
And, like a villain, pleaded for myself.

Julia. Did he? Did Rivers? Then he loves
Quick let me seek him out. [me still—

Or. (takes out the dagger.) First take this dagger;

Had you not forced it from my hand to-day,
I had not liv'd to know this guilty moment;
Take it, present it to the happy Rivers;
Tell him to plunge it in a traitor's heart;
Tell him his friend, Orlando, is that traitor;
Tell him Orlando forg'd the guilty tale;
Tell him Orlando was the only foe
Who at the altar would have murder'd Rivers,
And then have died himself.

Julia. Farewell—repent—think better.

[*Exit JULIA.*]

(*As she goes out, he still looks after her.*)

Enter RIVERS.

Riv. Turn, villain, turn!

Or. Ha! Rivers here!

Riv. Yes, Rivers.

Or. Gape wide, thou friendly earth, for ever hide me!

Rise Alps, ye crushing mountains, bury me!

Riv. Nay, turn, look on me.

Or. Rivers! oh, I cannot,
I dare not, I have wrong'd thee.

Riv. Doubly wrong'd me;

Thy complicated crimes cry out for vengeance.

Or. Take it.

Riv. But I would take it as a man.

Draw. (*RIVERS draws.*)

Or. Not for a thousand worlds.

Riv. Not fight!

Why, thou'rt a coward too as well as villain:

I shall despise as well as hate thee.

Or. Do;

Yet wrong me not, for if I am a coward

'Tis but to thee: there does not breathe the
Thyself excepted, who durst call me so, [man,
And live; but, oh! 'tis sure to heaven and thee,
I am the veriest coward guilt e'er made.

Now, as thou art a man, revenge thyself;

Strike!

Riv. No, not stab thee like a base assassin,

But meet thee as a foe.

Or. Think of my wrongs.

Riv. I feel them here.

Or. Think of my treachery.

Riv. Oh, wherefore wast thou false? how
have I lov'd thee!

Or. Of that no more: think of thy father's
Of Emmelina's wrongs— [grief,

Riv. Provoke me not.

Or. Of Julia—

Riv. Ha! I shall forget my honour,
And do a brutal violence upon thee,
Would tarnish my fair fame. Villain and cow-
Traitor! will nothing rouse thee? [ard!

Or. (drawing.) Swelling heart!
Yet this I have deserv'd, all this, and more.

As they prepare to fight, enter EMMELINA hastily.

Em. Lend me your swiftness, lightnings—
'tis too late.

See, they're engaged—oh no—they live, both
Hold, cruel men! [live!

Riv. Unlucky! 'tis my sister.

Em. Ye men of blood! if yet you have not
All sense of human kindness, love, or pity: [lost

If ever you were dear to one another;

If ever you desire or look for mercy,

When, in the wild extremity of anguish,

You supplicate that Judge who has declared

That vengeance is his own—oh, hear me now;

Hear a fond wretch, whom misery has made
bold; [souls.

Spare, spare each other's life—spare your own

Or. (to RIVERS.) Thou shouldst have struck
at once! O, tardy hand! [curtail'd!

Em. Does death want engines? is his power

Has fell disease forgotten to destroy!

Are there not pestilence and spotted plagues,

Devouring deluges, consuming fires,

Earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, and famine,

That man must perish by the hand of man!

Nay, to complete the horror, friend by friend!

Riv. What! shall I then endure this outrage
tamely! [love

Em. No.—If you *covet* death; if you're in

With slaughter and destruction—does not war

Invite you to her banner! Far and wide

Her dire dominion reaches.—There seek death.

There fall without a crime. There, where no

No individual rage, no private wrong, [hate,

Arms man against his brother.—Not as here,

Where *both* are often *murderers* in the act;

In the *foul purpose*—always.

Riv. Is honour nothing?

Em. Honour! O, yes, I know him. 'Tis a
phantom;

A shadowy figure wanting bulk and life,

Who, having nothing solid in himself,

Wraps his thin form in Virtue's plunder'd robe,

And steals her title. Honour! 'tis the fiend

Who feeds on orphans' tears and widows' groans,

And slakes his impious thirst in brothers' blood.

Honour! why, 'tis the primal law of hell!

The grand device to people the dark realms

With noble spirits, who, but for this cursed honour,

Had been at peace on earth, or bless'd in heaven.

With this *false* honour, Christians have no com-
Religion disavows, and truth disowns it. [merce.

Or. (throws away his sword.) An angel speaks,
and angels claim obedience.

Riv. (to ORLANDO.) This is the heart thou
hast wrong'd.

Em. (comes up to ORLANDO.) I pity thee;

Calamity has taught me how to pity:

Before I knew distress, my heart was hard;

But now it melts at every touch of woe;

And wholesome sufferings bring it back to virtue.

Rivers, he once was good and just like thee:

Who shall be proud, and think he stands secure,

If thy Orlando's false!

Riv. Think of his crime.

Em. Oh, think of his temptation! think 'twas
Julia;

Thy heart could not resist her; how should *his*?
It is the very error of his friendship.

Your souls were fram'd so very much alike,

He could not choose but to love whom Rivers
lov'd. [like this!

Or. Think'st thou there is in death a pang

Strike, my brave friend! be sudden and be

Death, which is terrible to happy men, [silent.

To me will be a blessing: I have lost [friend;

All that could make life dear; I've lost my

I've stabb'd the peace of mind of that fair crea-
I have surviv'd my honour : this is dying ! [ture,
The mournful fondness of officious love
Will plant no thorns upon my dying pillow ;
No precious tears embalm my memory,
But curses follow it.

Em. Sec, Rivers melts ;
He pities thee.

Or. I'll spare thy noble heart
The pain of punishing ; Orlando's self
Revenge both.

(*Goes to stab himself with the dagger.*)

Em. Barbarian ! kill me first.

Riv. (*snatching the dagger.*) Thou shalt not
die ! I swear I love thee still :

That secret sympathy which long has bound us,
Pleads for thy life with sweet but strong en-
treaty.

Thou shalt repair the wrongs of that dear saint,
And be again my friend.

Or. Oh, hear me,

Em. No.

I cannot stoop to live on charity,
And what but charity is love compell'd ?
I've been a weak, a fond, believing woman,
And credulous beyond my sex's softness :
But with the weakness, I've the pride of woman.
I loved with virtue, but I fondly loved ;
That passion fixed my fate, determined all,
And marked at once the colour of my life.
Hearts that love well, love long ; they love but
once. [mine ;

My peace thou hast destroyed, my honour's
She who aspired to gain Orlando's heart,
Shall never owe Orlando's hand to pity.

[*Exit EMMELINA.*

Or. (*after a pause.*) And I still live !

Riv. Farewell ! should I stay longer
I might forget my vow.

Or. Yet hear me, Rivers.

[*Exit RIVERS, ORLANDO following.*

Enter BERTRAND on the other side.

Ber. How's this ! my fortune fails me, both
alive !

I thought by stirring Rivers to this quarrel,
There was at least an equal chance against him.
I work invisibly, and, like the tempter,
My agency is seen in its effects.

Well, *honest* Bertrand ! now for Julia's letter.
(*Takes out a letter.*) This fond epistle of a love-
sick maid,

I've sworn to give, but did not swear to whom.
"Give it my love," said she, "my dearest lord !"
Rivers, she meant ; there's no address—that's
lucky.

Then where's the harm ? Orlando is a lord
As well as Rivers, loves her too as well.

(*Breaks open the letter.*) I must admire your
style—your pardon, fair one.

(*Runs over it.*) I tread in air—methinks I brush
the stars, [me.—

And spurn the subject world which rolls beneath
There's not a word but fits Orlando's case
As well as Rivers' ;—tender to excess—[less ;
No name—'twill do ; his faith in me is bound-
Then, as the brave are still, he's unsuspecting,
And credulous beyond a woman's weakness.

(*Going out he spies the dagger.*) Orlando's dag-
ger ! ha ! 'tis greatly thought.

This may do noble service ; such a scheme !

My genius catches fire ! the bright idea

Is formed at once, and fit for instant action.

[*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE—*The Garden.*

Ber. 'Twas here we were to meet ; where
does he stay ?

This compound of strange contradicting parts,
Too flexible for virtue, yet too virtuous
To make a flourishing, successful villain !
Conscience ! be still, preach not remorse to me ;
Remorse is for the luckless, failing villain.
He who succeeds repents not ; penitence
Is but another name for ill success.

Was Nero penitent when Rome was burnt ?

No ; but had Nero been a petty villain,

Subject to laws and liable to fear,

Nero perchance had been a penitent.

He comes.—This paper makes him all my own.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. At length this wretched, tempest-beaten
bark

Seems to have found its haven : I'm resolved ;
My wavering principles are fixed to honour ;
My virtue gathers force, my mind grows strong,
I feel an honest confidence within,
A precious earnest of returning peace.

Ber. Who feels secure, stands on the verge
of ruin. [*Aside.*]

Trust me, it joys my heart to see you thus :

What have I not attempted for your sake !

My love for you has warped my honest nature,
And friendship has infringed on higher duties.

Or. It was a generous fault.

Ber. Yet 'twas a fault.

Oh for a flinty heart that knows no weakness,
But moves right onward, unseduc'd by friend-
And all the weak affections ! [ship,

Or. Hear me, Bertrand !

This is my last farewell ; absence alone
Can prop my staggering virtue.

Ber. You're resolv'd :

Then Julia's favours come too late :

Or. What favours ?

Ber. Nay, nothing : I renounce these weak
affections ;

They have misled us both. I too repent,
And will return the letter back to Julia.

Or. Letter ! what letter ! Julia write to me
I will not see it. What would Rivers say ?

Ber. I do not mean you should : nay, I refus'd
To bring it you.

Or. Refus'd to bring the letter ?

Ber. Yes, I refus'd at first.

Or. Then thou *hast* brought it !

My faithful Bertrand !—come.

Ber. 'Twere best not see it.

Or. Not see it ! how ! not read my Julia's
letter !

An empire should not bribe me to forbear.
Come, come.

Ber. Alas, how frail is human virtue !
My resolution melts, and though I mean not
To trust you with the letter, I must tell you
With what a thousand, thousand charms she
gave it. [it,

"Take this," said she, "and, as Orlando reads
Attend to every accent of his voice ;
Watch every little motion of his eye ;
Mark if it sparkles when he talks of Julia ;
If when he speaks, poor Julia be thine ;
If when he sighs, his bosom heave for Julia :
Note every trifling act, each little look,
For, oh ! of what importance is the least
To those who love like me !"

Or. Delicious poison !
O how it taints my soul ! give me the letter.
(*BERTRAND offers it. ORLANDO refuses.*)
Ha ! where's the virtue which but now I boasted !
'Tis lost, 'tis gone—conflicting passions tear me.
I am again a villain. Give it—no :
A spark of honour strikes upon my soul.
'Take back the letter ; take it back, good Ber-
Spite of myself compel me to be just : [trand !
I will not read it.

Ber. How your friend will thank you !
Another day makes Julia his for ever.
Even now the great pavilion is prepar'd ;
There will the nuptial rites be solemnized.
Julia already dress'd in bridal robes,
Like some fair victim—

Or. O, no more, no more.
What can she write to me ?

Ber. Some prudent counsel.
Or. Then wherefore fear to read it ! come,
I'll venture ;
What wondrous harm can one poor letter do !
The letter—quick—the letter.

Ber. Since you force me. (*Gives it.*)
Or. Be firm, ye shivering nerves ! It is her
hand. [you this.
(*Reads.*) "To spare my blushes, Bertrand brings
How have you wrong'd me ! you believ'd me
false ; [you.
'Twas my compassion for your friend deceiv'd
Meet me at midnight in the great pavilion ;
But shun till then my presence ; from that hour
My future life is yours ; your once-lov'd friend
I pity and esteem ; but you alone
Possess the heart of Julia."

This to me !
I dream, I rave, 'tis all Elysium round me,
And thou, my better angel ! this to me !

Ber. I'm dumb ; oh, Julia ! what a fall is
thine !

Or. What, is it such a crime to love ! away—
Thy moral comes too late ; thou shouldst have
Thy scruple sooner, or not urg'd at all : [urg'd
Thou shouldst—alas ! I know not what I say—
But this I know, the charming Julia loves me,
Appoints a meeting at the dead of night !
She loves ! the rest is all beneath my care.

Ber. Becircumspect ; the hour is just at hand ;
Since all is ready for your purpos'd parting,
See your attendants be dispos'd aright,
Near the pavilion gate.

Or. Why so !

Ber. 'Tis plain,
Julia must be the partner of your flight :

'Tis what she means, you must not mind her
A little gentle violence perhaps, [struggles ;
To make her yield to what she had resolv'd,
And save her pride ; she'll thank you for it after.

Or. Take her by force ! I like not that, O
Bertrand,

There is a mutinous spirit in my blood,
That wars against my conscience. Tell my Julia
I will not fail to meet her.

Ber. I obey.
Be near the garden ; I shall soon return.

[*Exit BERTRAND.*
Or. This giant sin, whose bulk so lately scared
Shrinks to a common size ; I now embrace [me,
What I but lately fear'd to look upon.

Why, what a progress have I made in guilt !
Where is the hideous form it lately wore !
It grows familiar to me ; I can think,
Contrive, and calmly meditate on mischief,
Talk temperately of sin, and cherish crimes
I lately so abhorr'd, that had they once
But glanced upon the surface of my fancy
I had been terrified. Oh, wayward conscience !
Too tender for repose, too scar'd for penitence !
[*Exit ORLANDO.*

*Scene changes to another part of the Garden—
A grand Pavilion—The Moon shining.*

Enter RIVERS, in a melancholy attitude.

Riv. Ye lovely scenes of long-remember'd
bliss !

Scenes which I hop'd were fated to bestow
Still dearer blessings in a beauteous bride !
Thou gay pavilion, which art dress'd so fair
To witness my espousals, why, ah, why
Art thou adorn'd in vain ! Yet still I court thee,
For Julia lov'd thee once :—dear, faithless Julia !
Yet is she false ! Orlando swore she was not :
It may be so, yet she avoids my presence,
Keeps close from every eye, but most from
mine.

Enter ORLANDO.

Or. Ah ! Rivers here ! would I had shunn'd
his walks !
How shall I meet the man I mean to wrong !

Riv. Why does Orlando thus expose his
To this cold air ! [health

Or. I ask the same of Rivers !

Riv. Because this solitude, this silent hour,
Feeds melancholy thoughts, and soothes my
My Julia will not see me. [soul.

Or. How !

Riv. She denies me
Admittance to her presence.

Or. (*aside.*) Then I'm lost,
Confirm'd a villain, now 'tis plain she loves me.

Riv. She will not pardon me one single fault
Of jealous love, though thou hadst clear'd up
all. [known.

Or. Wait till to-morrow, all will then be
Riv. Wait till to-morrow ! Look at that
pavilion ;

All was prepar'd ; yes, I dare tell thee all,
For thou art honest now.

Or. (*aside.*) That wounds too deeply.

Riv. Soon as the midnight bell gave the glad
summons,

This dear pavilion had beheld her mine.

Or. All will be well to-morrow. (*aside.*) If I stay [Rivers.
I shall betray the whole.—Good night, my
Riv. Good night; go you to rest; I still shall
walk. [Exit ORLANDO.

Yes, I will trace her haunts; my too fond heart,
Like a poor bird that's hunted from its nest,
Dares not return, and knows not where to fix;
Still it delights to hover round the spot
Which lately held its treasure; eyes it still,
And with heart-breaking tenderness surveys
The scene of joys which never may return. [Exit.

Scene changes to another part of the garden.

Re-enter ORLANDO.

Or. Did he say rest? talk'd he of rest to me?
Can rest and guilt associate? but no matter,
I cannot now go back; then such a prize,
Such voluntary love, so fair, so yielding,
Would make archangels forfeit their allegiance!
I dare not think; reflection leads to madness.

Enter BERTRAND.

Bertrand! I was not made for this dark work:
My heart recoils—poor Rivers!

Ber. What of Rivers?

Or. I've seen him.

Ber. Where?

Or. Before the great pavilion.

Ber. (*aside.*) That's lucky, saves me trouble;
were he absent,
Half of my scheme had failed.

Or. He's most unhappy;
He wish'd me rest, spoke kindly to me, Bertrand;
How, how can I betray him?

Ber. He deceives you;
He's on the watch, else wherefore now abroad
At this late hour? beware of treachery.

Or. I am myself the traitor.

Ber. Come, no more!
The time draws near, you know the cypress
'Tis dark. [walk,

Or. The fitter for dark deeds like mine.
Ber. I have prepar'd your men; when the bell
Go into the pavilion; there you'll find [strikes
The blushing maid, who with faint screams per-
haps

Will feign resentment. But you want a sword.

Or. A sword!—I'll murder no one—why a
sword? [take mine;

Ber. 'Tis prudent to be arm'd; no words,
There may be danger, Julia may be lost,
This night secures or loses her for ever.
The cypress walk—spare none who look like
spies.

Or. (*looking at the sword.*) How deeply is that
soul involv'd in guilt,
Who dares not hold communion with its
Nor ask itself what it designs to do! [thoughts,
But dallies blindly with the gen'ral sin,
Of unexamin'd, undefin'd perdition!

[Exit ORLANDO.

Ber. Thus far propitious fortune fills my sails,
Yet still I doubt his milkiness of soul;
My next exploit must be to find out Rivers,
And, as from Julia, give him a feign'd message,
To join her here at the pavilion gate;

There shall Orlando's well-arm'd servants meet
him,

And take his righteous soul from this bad world.
If they should fail, his honest cousin Bertrand
Will help him onward in his way to heav'n.

Then this good dagger, which I'll leave beside
him,

Will, while it proves the deed, conceal the doer;
'Tis not an English instrument of mischief,
And who'll suspect good Bertrand wore a dag-
ger?

To clear me further, I've no sword—unarm'd—
Poor helpless Bertrand! Then no longer poor,
But Guildford's heir, and lord of these fair lands.

[Exit BERTRAND.

Enter ORLANDO on the other side.

Or. Draw thy dun curtain round, oh, night!
black night!

Inspirer and concealer of foul crimes!

Thou wizard night! who conjur'st up dark
thoughts, [guilt!

And mak'st him bold, who else would start at
Beneath thy veil the villain dares to act,

What in broad day he would not dare to think.
Oh, night! thou hid'st the dagger's point from
men,

But canst thou screen the assassin from himself?
Shut out the eye of heav'n? extinguish con-
science?

Or heal the wounds of honour? Oh, no, no, no!
Yonder she goes—the guilty, charming Julia!
My genius drives me on—Julia, I come.

(Runs off.)

SCENE—*The Pavilion.*

*An arched door, through which JULIA and her
maid come forward on the stage.*

Julia. Not here! not come! look out, my
faithful Anna.

There was a time—oh, time for ever dear!
When Rivers would not make his Julia wait.
Perhaps he blames me, thirks the appointment
Too daring, too unlike his bashful Julia; [bold,
But 'twas the only means my faithful love
Devis'd, to save him from Orlando's rashness.
I have kept close, refus'd to see my Rivers;
Now all is still, and I have ventured forth,
With this kind maid, and virtue for my guard.
Come, we'll go in, he cannot sure be long.

(They go into the pavilion.)

*Enter ORLANDO, his sword drawn and bloody,
his hair dishevelled.*

Or. What have I done! a deed that earns
damnation!

Where shall I fly? ah! the pavilion door!

'Tis open—it invites me to fresh guilt;

I'll not go in—let that fallen angel wait,

And curse her stars as I do.

(The midnight bell strikes.) Hark! the bell!

Demons of darkness, what a peal is that!

Again! 'twill wake the dead—I cannot bear it!

'Tis terrible as the last trumpet's sound!

That was the marriage signal! Powers of hell,
What blessings have I blasted! Rivers! Julia!

(JULIA comes out.)

Julia. My Rivers calls; I come, I come.—
Orlando!

Or. Yes,
Thou beautiful deceiver! 'tis that wretch.

Julia. That perjurd friend.

Or. That devil!

Julia. I'm betrayed.
Why art thou here?

Or. Thou canst make ruin lovely,
Or I would ask, why didst thou bring me here?
Julia. I bring thee here?

Or. Yes, thou, bright falsehood! thou.

Julia. No, by my hopes of heaven! where is
Some crime is meant. [my Rivers?

Or. (catches her hand.) *Julia!* the crime is
done.

Dost thou not shudder? art thou not amaz'd!
Art thou not cold and blasted with my touch!
Is not thy blood congeal'd! does no black horror
Fill thy presaging soul! look at these hands;
Julia! they're stain'd with blood; blood, *Julia,*
Nay, look upon them. [blood!

Julia. Ah! I dare not. Blood!

Or. Yes, thou dear false one, with the noblest
That ever stain'd a dark assassin's hand. [blood
Had not thy letter with the guilty message
To meet thee here this hour, blinded my honour,
And wrought my passion into burning phrensy,
Whole worlds should not have bribed me.

Julia. Letter and message!
I sent thee none.

Or. Then Bertrand has betrayed me!
And I have done a deed beyond all reach,
All hope of mercy—I have murder'd Rivers.

Julia. Oh! (She falls into her maid's arms.)

Or. O rich reward which love prepares for
Thus hell repays its instruments! [murder!

Enter GUILDFORD with servants.

Guil. Where is he!
Where is this midnight murderer! this assassin?
This is the place Orlando's servant nam'd.

Or. The storm comes on. 'Tis Guildford,
good old man!

Behold the wretch accurst of heaven and thee.
Guil. Accurst of both indeed. How, *Julia*
fainting!

Or. She's pure as holy truth; she was de-
And so was I. [ceiv'd,

Guil. Who tempted thee to this!

Or. Love, hell, and Bertrand.

Julia. (recovering.) Give me back my Rivers;
I will not live without him. Oh, my father!

Guil. Father! I'm none; I am no more a
father;

I have no child; my son is basely murder'd,
And my sweet daughter, at the fatal news,
Is quite bereft of reason.

Or. Seize me, bind me:
If death's too great a mercy, let me live:
Drag me to some damp dungeon's horrid gloom,
Deep as the centre, dark as my offences;
Come, do your office, take my sword; oh, Ber-
trand,

Yet, ere I perish, could it reach thy heart!
(They seize ORLANDO.)

Julia. I will not long survive thee, oh, my
Rivers!

Vol. I.

Enter RIVERS with the dagger.

Riv. Who calls on Rivers with a voice so sad,
So full of sweetness!

Guil. Ah, my son!

Julia. 'Tis he, 'tis he!

Julia and RIVERS run into each other's arms.
*ORLANDO breaks from the guards, and falls
on his knees.*

Or. He lives, he lives! the godlike Rivers
lives!

Hear it, ye host of heaven! witness, ye saints!
Recording angels, tell it in your songs;
Breathe it, celestial spirits, to your lutes,
That Rivers lives!

Julia. Explain this wondrous happiness!

Riv. 'Twas Bertrand whom Orlando killed;
the traitor

Has with his dying breath confess'd the whole.

Or. Good sword, I thank thee!

Riv. In the tangled maze
Orlando miss'd the path he was to take, [ceal'd
And pass'd through that where Bertrand lay con-
To watch th' event: Orlando thought 'twas me,
And that I play'd him false: the walk was dark.
In Bertrand's bloody hand I found this dagger,
With which he meant to take my life; but how
Were you alarm'd?

Guil. One of Orlando's men,
Whom wealth could never bribe to join in mur-

Or. Murder! I bribe to murder! [der—

Riv. No; 'twas Bertrand

Brib'd them to that curst deed; he lov'd my

Or. Exquisite villain! [sister.

Guil. Fly to Emmelina,

If any spark of reason yet remain,
Tell her the joyful news. Alas, she's here!

Wildly she flies! Ah, my distracted child!

Enter EMMELINA distracted.

Em. Off, off! I will have way! ye shall not
hold me:

I come to seek my lord; is he not here?
Tell me, ye virgins, have ye seen my love,
Or know you where his flocks repose at noon?
My love is comely—sure you must have seen
him;

'Tis the great promiser! who vows and swears;
The perjurd youth! who deals in oaths and
breaks them.

In truth he might deceive a wiser maid.
I lov'd him once; he then was innocent,
He was no murderer then, indeed he was not;
He had not kill'd my brother.

Riv. Nor has now;
Thy brother lives.

Em. I know it—yes, he lives
Among the cherubim. Murd'ers too will live;
But where? I'll tell you where—down, down,
down, down.

How deep it is! 'tis fathomless—'tis dark!
No—there's a pale blue flame—ah, poor Or-
Guil. My heart will burst. [lando!

Or. Pierce mine, and that will ease it.

Em. (comes up to her father.) I knew a maid
who lov'd—but she was mad—

Fond, foolish girl! 'Thank heav'n, I am not mad;
2 N

Yet the afflicting angel has been with me;
But do not tell my father, he would grieve;
Sweet, good old man—perhaps he'd weep to
hear it:

I never saw my father weep but once;
I'll tell you when it was. 'I did not weep;
'Twas when—but soft, my brother must not
know it.

'Twas when his poor fond daughter was refus'd.
Guild. Who can bear this!

Or. I will not live to bear it.

Em. (comes up to ORLANDO.) Take comfort,
thou poor wretch! I'll not appear

Against thee, nor shall Rivers; but blood must,
Blood will appear; there's no concealing blood.
What's that! my brother's ghost—it vanishes;

(Catches hold of RIVERS.)

Stay, take me with thee, take me to the skies;
I have thee fast; thou shalt not go without me.
But hold—may we not take the murder with us!

That look says—No. Why then I'll not go
with thee.

Yet hold me fast—'tis dark—I'm lost—I'm
gone. *(Dies.)*

Or. One crime makes many needful; this
day's sin

Blots out a life of virtue. Good old man!

My bosom bleeds for thee; thy child is dead,
And I the cause. 'Tis but a poor atonement;
But I can make no other. *(Stabs himself.)*

Riv. What hast thou done!

Or. Fill'd up the measure of my sins. Oh,
mercy!

Eternal goodness, pardon this last guilt!

Rivers, thy hand!—farewell! forgive me,
heaven!

Yet is it not an act which bars forgiveness,
And shuts the door of grace for ever!—Oh!

(Dies.)
(The curtain falls to soft music.)

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.—SPOKEN BY MR. LEE LEWES.

UNHAND me, gentlemen, by heaven, I say,
I'll make a ghost of him who bars my way.

[Behind the scenes.]

Forth let me come—A poetaster true,
As lean as envy, and as baneful too;
On the dull audience let me vent my rage,
Or drive these female scribblers from the stage.
For scene or history, we've none but these,
The law of liberty and wit they seize;
In tragic—comic—pastoral—they dare to please.
Each puny bard must surely burst with spite,
To find that women with such fame can write;
But, oh, your partial favour is the cause,
Which feeds their follies with such full applause.
Yet still our tribe shall seek to blast their fame,
And ridicule each fair pretender's aim;
Where the dull duties of domestic life
Wage with the muse's toils eternal strife.

What motley cares Corilla's mind perplex,
While maids and metaphors conspire to vex!
In studious dishabille behold her sit,
A letter'd gossip, and a housewife wit;
At once invoking, though for different views,
Her gods, her cook, her milliner, and muse.
Round her strew'd room a frippery chaos lies,
A checker'd wreck of notable and wise;
Bills, books, caps, couplets, combs, a varied mass,
Oppress the toilet, and obscure the glass;
Unfinish'd here an epigram is laid,
And there a mantuamaker's bill unpaid:
Here newborn plays foretaste the town's ap-
plause,

There, dormant patterns pine for future gauze;
A moral essay now is all her care,
A satire next, and then a bill of fare:
A scene she now projects, and now a dish,
Here's act the first—and here—remove with
Now while this eye in a fine phrensy rolls, [fish.
That, soberly casts up a bill for coals;
Black pins and daggers in one leaf she sticks,
And tears, and thread, and balls, and thimbles
mix.

Sappho, 'tis true, long vers'd in epic song,
For years esteem'd all household studies wrong;
When dire mishap, though neither shame nor sin,
Sappho herself, and not her muse, lies in.
The virgin Nine in terror fly the bower,
And matron Juno claims despot power;
Soon Gothic hags the classic pile o'erturn,
A cauldron supplants the sacred urn;
Nor books nor implements escape their rage,
They spike the inkstand, and they rend the page;
Poems and plays one barbarous fate partake,
Ovid and Plautus suffer at the stake,
And Aristotle's only sav'd—to wrap plumcake.

Yet, shall a woman tempt the tragic scene?
And dare—but hold—I must repress my spleen;
I see your hearts are pledg'd to her applause,
While Shakspeare's spirit seems to aid her
cause;

Well pleas'd to aid—since o'er his sacred bier
A female hand did ample trophies rear,
And gave the greenest laurel that is worshipp'd
there.



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